LET'S GO! YOUR SEASON STARTS HERE

EVERY WEEK
23 FEBRUARY 2023

HORSE&HOUND

BUMPER SPECIAL

Your best year yet

- How winners time their peak
- Budget-friendly competing
- Successful riders' habits

Ros Canter
and Lordships Graffalo

128
Top events: where to watch your heroes

TRAINING
How to produce a happy, healthy athlete

SHOWING
Stuart Hollings: why we need a winter circuit

TURNOUT
Tips to keep your kit immaculate

VISIT…

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Outstanding Results

#FedonTopSpec

Orchids Femke, winning the Winter JD/JC Qualifier at Southview Equestrian Centre, ridden by Millie Lawson and owned by Phil and Laura Lane.

Photograph by Landscapes and Horses

"Ginge (Orchids Femke) came to us in October, she was rather overweight and fed a lot considering her work load. We moved her on to TopSpec Performance Lite Feed Balancer, TopSpec Performance Cubes and TopChop Lite and her performance continues to improve with every competition, culminating in a treble clear to win the Winter JD/JC Qualifier at Southview. We are very much looking forward to jumping in the iconic main ring at Hickstead in July." David Lawson

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for a 148cm (450kg) horse in medium to hard work:-

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23 February 2023 Volume CXXXIX Issue 8

'I FREELY ADMIT THAT THE BEST OF MY FUN I OWE IT TO HORSE AND HOUND' - *Whyte Melville*

HORSE&HOUND

It's here!

DAFFODILS, lighter evenings and milder days – the spring competition season is around the corner and the sense of anticipation is wonderful. This issue is packed with the detail you need to have your most enjoyable year yet as a rider and spectator, whatever your hopes for 2023.

If you are looking for marginal gains, turn to page 38 to find out how the likes of eight-time Olympian Andrew Hoy are utilising science to give themselves the edge. If you have a particular championship in mind for 2023, take a look at our feature on timing your peak to find out how prolific winners ensure they are at their best at the right moment by working back from that one key date or dates in the calendar (feature, p50). And when it comes to finding those dates, from page 62 we help you plan your season with a focus on the key events you'll want to hone your campaign – or spectator season – around.

Once you're set for the year, with plenty of food for thought, turn to page 60 for a little light relief – we're a pretty tribal bunch and found that each sport's riders had a thought or two on their peers from other disciplines: "They have civilised shows, with bars. We get up at 4.30am to stand in a muddy field." Who could they mean?

Here's wishing you a very happy and successful season, both in the saddle and from the stands.

Sarah Jenkins
Editor-in-Chief

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COVER Ros Canter and Lordships Graffalo at Badminton 2022. Credit: Hannah Cole Photography

SCAN TO GET OUR WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

AL SHIRA'AA
SHIRA'AA
AL SHIRA

Page 62: will you be at Hickstead for the Derby thrills?

Pictures by Peter Nixon and Andrew Sydenham

Get more of what you love on **p32**

STAY INSPIRED

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Olympic winner Lamaze facing horse sales lawsuit

A civil case has been launched against Eric Lamaze over the sales of two showjumpers

By ELEANOR JONES

Nikka VD Bisschop, here with another rider, is one of the horses concerned

FORMER Olympic champion showjumper Eric Lamaze is accused of “deceiving” owners of two horses in a lawsuit worth over $1.3m.

The Canadian rider is the subject of the civil lawsuit against him and his companies in Palm Beach, Florida.

Lorna Guthrie and Jeffrey Brandmaier took action relating to horses Newberry Balia NL and Nikka VD Bisschop. The complaint states that the plaintiffs have a long history with Eric, and that the action is based on a scheme to “induce plaintiffs to transfer large sums of money to defendants, purportedly for the purchase of horses for investment purposes”, to “deceive plaintiffs regarding the purchase” of the horses, to “betray” plaintiffs regarding their sale and “withhold the proceeds of sale”.

> *“It’s a serious lawsuit and will require experienced counsel”*
>
> LAWYER AVERY CHAPMAN

The complaint states that in 2020, Eric offered the plaintiffs the chance to invest in Newberry, by paying $326,452.50 for 100% ownership. It claims that the aim was for Eric and his staff to train and compete the horse to “elevate her profile and value”, at which point she would be sold for a profit. The plaintiffs would cover all her costs and receive all profit from her sale, the complaint states.

The plaintiffs’ case is that they paid but learned one of Eric’s companies was invoiced €190,000. They claim he “falsely and deceptively inflated the price – and therefore made a wrongful profit of $103,343.06”.

Newberry won two classes at Aachen in September 2020, after which it was agreed a buyer should be found, the case states, but after 20 months, the defendants “failed” to do so. “This is no doubt linked to the fact that Newberry was retired from two classes due to crashes in the last three classes under Mr Lamaze’s care and arrived back in the United States with an injury”, the lawsuit states.

The complaint states that in or around September 2020, Eric proposed he and the plaintiffs invest in Nikka. The cost and profits would be split equally, it is alleged.

JOINT PARTNERS

THE plaintiffs say they paid $278,000, but “soon learned that defendants had no intention of performing their end of the bargain”.

The complaint claims that the plaintiffs learned the defendants paid €375,000 for the horse. It states that Eric “convinced” the plaintiffs to sell their share for $525,000 and become joint partners in Eric’s share. It says Eric “took and retained” this money from the new buyers, but when the plaintiffs contacted him, “he… conceded he had already spent plaintiffs’ funds”.

The plaintiffs say Eric sold another 45% share in Nikka to the buyers, for $2,270,000 and they received none of this. They say Eric paid them $170,000, but owes them $1,325,834.21.

US lawyer Avery Chapman, principal of Equine Law Group and founding chair of the equine law committee of the Florida Bar, told *H&H* although he cannot comment specifically, and has no position, on this suit, the alleged issues raised are “unfortunately, significant yet common”. These include accusations of omitting to declare financial interests, and accurate disclosure, in buying and selling horses.

State law requires financial interests to be disclosed accurately; Mr Chapman said of all the US states, Florida’s laws in this area are “the most aggressive and comprehensive”.

“These are allegations and a complaint and anything can be written in a complaint; that doesn’t mean it’s true,” he said, adding that the accusations, if proven, might constitute unfair trade practices.

“This looks like allegations of mis-statement of purchase price, so it’s a cleaner case,” he said. “It’s a serious lawsuit and will require legal counsel very knowledgeable in equine law.”

Eric Lamaze did not want to comment at this time.

Pictures by Getty

Warning as M&M treats cause positive dope test

A rider who fed her horse chocolate at a show lost two major titles as a result after he tested positive for caffeine

RIDERS have been urged to be aware of contamination from all possible sources, after a horse who ate peanut M&Ms lost national titles.

US-based Rylee Morgan and I'm A Lopin Sensation lost $11,000 (£9,140) in winnings from the American Paint Horse Association (APHA) World Show in July 2022. The pair won two championship classes, then the horse tested positive for trace amounts of caffeine.

"My world has done a 180," Rylee told *H&H*. "I don't want this to happen to anyone else."

Rylee said "Simon" was dope-tested at the show, and she thought nothing of it, as she said she would never give a horse a banned substance.

"Five weeks later, I had an email," she said. "My whole stomach dropped.

"I called my vets and they said 'That's chocolate'. It wasn't part of his routine but it's my nervous habit. I had a handful of M&Ms, so did he. I'd never have done it if I'd known."

Rylee took legal advice and secured vets' testimonies – "one said the amounts were the equivalent of a drop of water in a swimming pool" – but the decision to disqualify stands.

"They have no tolerance for drugs, which I respect, but it's the spirit of the law rather than the word," Rylee said. "We were so upset that something so trivial could turn your world round. I'd like to educate but hope there could be clarification. Not necessarily a rule change, but something so miniscule is hard to grasp."

Rylee Morgan and I'm A Lopin Sensation were disqualified

By ELEANOR JONES

Ian Beamish, a member of the British Equine Veterinary Association equestrian sport and racing committee, told *H&H* that as horse sport is under more scrutiny than ever, doping controls are essential in our duty of care to horses.

"However as we are able to test for more substances it can often be something seemingly innocuous that catches us off guard," he said. "Caffeine is a potent stimulant that can be found in high concentrations in energy drinks, chocolate, plants even decaffeinated drinks."

APHA executive director Billy Smith told *H&H* the organisation is committed to "due process for every member accused of violating rules".

"Caffeine is forbidden regardless of how it is ingested. Every member accused of violating rules has the right to go through our disciplinary process and appeal. This member did not take advantage of her right to appeal."

New Blenheim organisers confirmed

BLENHEIM'S new organisers hope to reinstate the grassroots eventers' challenge and attract more fans to the fixture.

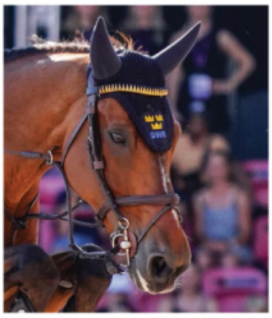
Stable Events Ltd – which runs three game fairs and includes many of the team who ran the last game fair at Blenheim in 2014 – will take over the Oxfordshire event for 2023 (14–17 September).

Katrina Midgley of Stable Events and Blenheim Palace Horse Trials event organiser, said Stable Events' speciality is running events "usually in fields with little to no infrastructure" and outlined its knowledge in tradestands and traffic flow, and the game fairs' similar demographic audience to horse trials.

"We'll work with experts who will ensure the sport runs smoothly, including the reintroduction of grassroots classes," she said.

"Our expertise will be apparent when developing the showground, attractions and visitor experience to deliver a first-class international showcase." **PR**

HORSES
IN THE NEWS



H&M ALL IN
Peder Fredricson's double Olympic individual silver medallist, owned by Charlotte Söderström, has retired aged 17. They were European champions and won Tokyo team silver.

PACINO
Clem McMahon's late top jumping stallion has been cloned. The Irish rider has revealed the existence of three-year-old Pacino II and he will be available for breeding this year.

SIRIUS BLACK III
British dressage rider Gemma Owen's junior team horse has died at 18 after a "sudden, severe illness". He had top results at small tour with Gemma and trainer Sarah Higgins.

IN BRIEF

EXTRA FUNDING FOR PARA EQUESTRIANS

BRITISH para dressage will receive £251,000 extra funding for Paris 2024.

The money will come from a £4m pot announced by UK Sport, shared across 33 sports, towards the 2024 Olympics and Paralympics.

The funds follow an extra £11.2m UK Sport investment announced in December 2021. And although dressage, eventing and jumping received a £660,662 share of that, only para equestrians will benefit this time.

"With qualification for the Games secured, this welcome additional investment will allow us to ensure the essentials are covered as well as additional coaching and competition opportunities," said Georgina Sharples, British Equestrian para dressage performance manager.

HELP NEEDED FOR UKRAINIAN HORSES

FUNDS are being raised towards generators and hay for Ukraine.

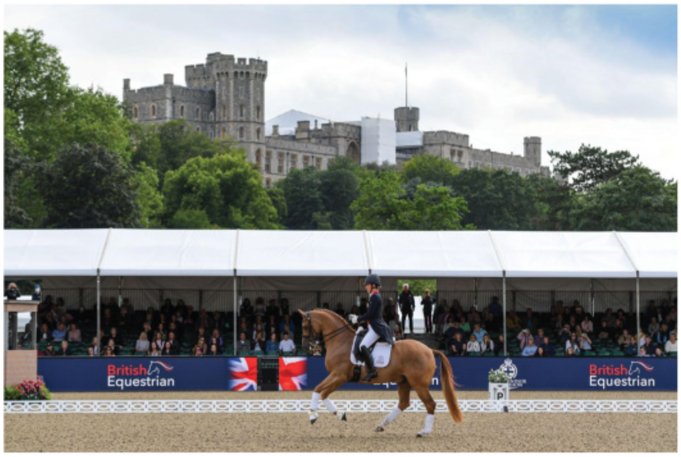
The Federation of European Equine Veterinary Associations and Ukrainian Equestrian Charity Foundation are asking for help to feed horses near war zones, where many do not have grazing, and the war has been preventing the harvesting and transportation of hay.

The British Equine Veterinary Association, as part of British Equestrians for Ukraine, is supplying 10 generators to the country to help care for displaced and injured horses during enforced power cuts.

● *Visit: justgiving.com/campaign/powertoukraine and feeva-for-ukraine.raisely.com*

Boost to Britain's dressage calendar

New fixtures are to be held and favourites return in 2023, with competition at a number of high-profile venues



International dressage returns to Royal Windsor Horse Show

Picture by Alamy

By LUCY ELDER

BRITAIN'S international dressage calendar has been boosted with new and returning shows at top venues.

Addington returns to the fold, opening Britain's international calendar (16–19 March). International dressage is back at Royal Windsor Horse Show (RWHS) and Hickstead.

British Dressage (BD) CEO Jason Brautigam told *H&H* that owing to the cost and challenges of competing overseas, BD wanted to offer "additional opportunities for our international riders".

"The sport has grown considerably so it's vitally important our senior, para, under-21 and under-25 athletes have access to these invaluable home-based shows to obtain scores for selection," he said.

He added that the sport is "delighted to welcome back" Addington and Hickstead, and confirmed that the CDI/CPEDI fixtures at Wellington (8–11 June) and Hartpury (2–9 July) are in the calendar this year.

CONSULTATION

"FOLLOWING extensive consultation with our international riders, RWHS and Hickstead, everyone agreed that they would like to see a British CDI tour in mid-May," he said. "These will run consecutively, with Windsor's CDI4* grand prix and freestyle on 10–11 May, and the CDI3* at Hickstead on 11–14 May.

"All five venues offer top-class facilities and will provide a fantastic experience so we are looking forward to working with them to establish this exciting new-look international dressage programme in 2023."

Hickstead's draft schedule has the senior CDI classes at the weekend. This would mean there should be no direct crossover for the seniors at Windsor.

"There are more than 200 combinations who compete at international level across senior, para and under-21s, so we are confident these shows will be well supported," Mr Brautigam said.

"Although Windsor and Hickstead are in close proximity, we are hoping that some of our top riders will be able to support both shows with different horses.

> *"It's going to be fantastic"*
> RICHARD DAVISON

Hickstead director Lizzie Bunn said: "With another dressage international at RWHS just before our international classes, it is hoped more riders will travel from overseas to compete at two top British showgrounds in the space of a week."

Gareth Hughes and Carl Hester both voiced support for the return of international classes at Hickstead.

"Given the challenges of competing on the continent, it's more important than ever that British-based riders have the opportunity to compete on a bigger stage on home soil, and now they have the chance to ride at Windsor and Hickstead within a week," said Carl.

DISCUSSIONS

RIDER Richard Davison, also dressage organiser at RWHS, told *H&H* they have had good discussions with Hickstead.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for riders so they can make the most of the opportunity to do both," he said. "I think it's going to be fantastic. The more UK internationals, the better. Brexit made it so expensive and complicated to go to Europe."

Addington has recently reopened with a new team.

Sport director Alan Beaumont told *H&H* they "brought forward plans" to host CDI/CPEDI when the spot held by Keysoe became available. He said Addington is keen to support the national calendar and governing bodies ("without them there is no national sport") and is looking into FEI jumping dates.

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Warning to judges about riders who are also friends

Judges have discussed social media, socialising, rider safety and ponies' correct way of going

MORALS, scoring and social media were among the topics discussed at the British Show Pony Society (BSPS) 2023 judges' conference.

Some 180 judges attended the conference on 11 February, which was followed by the society's AGM and awards.

Edward Young, BSPS council member and producer, spoke on the morals of judging.

"If you socialise with competitors, you could be perceived as a crook even if you aren't. Judges have to be very careful about the perception they give," he told *H&H*.

"Showing under friends is always going to be a bit of a thing, but the showing world is so small, it's very difficult not to know everyone. But if you go on holiday with someone or speak to someone every day on the phone, you probably shouldn't show under them."

> *"Judges have to be careful about the perception they give"*
> EDWARD YOUNG

Edward also spoke about issues relating to social media.

Judges also compared scores for way of going. Library image

By BECKY MURRAY

"If someone posts a picture of a horse in a category you judge, it's probably unwise to comment – you have to be very careful about interaction," he said. "When a judge posts that they had a lovely day at a show, it gives the opportunity to open a conversation over which they've got no control."

Another key point was way of going and scoring. Clips of ponies were played and every table gave a score.

New chair of the BSPS judges' assessment board Joanne Pybus told *H&H*: "There were mid-range scores but some gave 10 marks lower or higher. The aim was to encourage everybody to engage in discussion, and encourage judges to use a wide range of marks when they're out."

BSPS chairman Paul Cook said there had been a lot of innovation with new awards and classes in the past year.

"It was a very positive year, and we will continue these opportunities this year with the London International Horse Show [LIHS] performance classes and the cradle and nursery stake finals," he said. "We're trying to make sure all our members have something they can aspire to and achieve."

Among the topics at the AGM was rider safety, with new rules on concussion requiring riders who fall to seek medical advice before riding, bringing the BSPS in line with others such as the Pony Club.

Paul said one "hot topic" is the HOYS intermediate championships; the 153cm small intermediate and 158cm large intermediate will be a combined championship for 2023. HOYS said this was "extensively discussed with relevant societies" and was owing to concern over numbers in plaited pony classes.

Paul added that the BSPS is considering how it can offer alternative opportunities, "particularly for people who perhaps unknowingly bought a pony for each section and now won't be able to ride both if they do qualify for HOYS. We strongly encouraged HOYS to consult members and have a longer lead time if changes like these are planned," he said.

DECLINING NUMBERS

A HOYS spokesman told *H&H* that since the peak of the intermediate show riding type from 2008–2016, plaited pony numbers have declined.

"In a bid to uphold the quality of animals at the final, HOYS took steps to reduce the qualifying spaces," he said.

"But in 2022, one in three intermediates campaigning for this class qualified, and across the heights, 96 animals contested the classes. It is unsustainable to run the class in its previous format. The BSPS noted that novice numbers were not encouraging, which we are keen to work with BSPS to improve.

"Plaited ponies are an important part of the heritage of the show, and we are committed to ensuring they have a place at HOYS."

Pictures by David Miller, Alamy and Getty

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

German eventer **Michael Jung** won two CSI4* showjumping grands prix with Fischerchelsea at the Zangersheide International at Sentower Park.

World eventing champion **Yasmin Ingham** has been shortlisted for sportswoman and ambassador of the year at the Isle of Man sports awards.

Flat jockey **Oisin Murphy** had a victorious return to racing on 16 February after his 14-month suspension, on the Michael Appleby-trained Jupiter Express at Chelmsford.

Swift action on hunt that breached rules

A disciplinary panel has suspended those involved in video footage of a fox

By BECKY MURRAY

A HUNT has been found to have committed "serious breaches" of the core principles and rules of the British Hound Sports Association (BHSA).

On 9 February, the Hound Sports Regulatory Authority (HSRA) held an urgent disciplinary hearing for the Avon Vale Hunt, which had been provisionally suspended from hunting activities after an incident on 20 December.

The main video evidence showed a fox "being extracted from an earth in the presence of a pack of hounds and then thrown to the pack". The panel reviewed the film and heard evidence from the hunt.

The panel found "on a balance of probabilities, the evidence revealed serious breaches" of the core principles and rules of the BHSA.

The panel indicated that it was minded to expel the hunt and its masters, huntsman and kennel huntsman.

"This would mean that in all probability, the hunt would no longer be able to function," said a BHSA spokesman.

The hunt had 14 days to make further representations. The panel ordered it to be suspended in the meantime.

The Countryside Alliance (CA) said it was right the HSRA quickly sanctioned and communicated that widely.

"The incident highlights the importance of effective regulation to ensure we are able to offer reassurance to the police, media, politicians and public that this type of behaviour – which is incredibly rare – will not be tolerated and those responsible punished," said a CA spokesman.

H&H has contacted the hunt for comment.

The case highlights the importance of effective regulation

Jump jockey **Bryony Frost** rode a 231/1 treble for Paul Nicholls at Wincanton on 18 February, with wins on Flic Ou Voyou, Switch Hitter and Press Your Luck.

Jockey **Tom Scudamore** announced his retirement on 17 February, the day after a fall. The 40-year-old rode more than 1,500 winners during his 25-year career.

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Drivers' rural speeds are major concern to riders

A 2022 report on motoring found that nearly half those surveyed admitted to speeding on rural roads

Many believe the 60mph limit on rural roads needs changing

By LUCY ELDER

NEWS that the proportion of drivers who admit to speeding on rural roads has risen significantly is of major concern to equestrians.

The RAC 2022 Report on Motoring found 48% of 3,102 drivers questioned had broken the limit on 60mph rural roads, up from 44% in 2021. This matches the 2016 record.

A total of 8% confessed they had done this frequently, and 40% occasionally, on up to half their journeys on these roads.

The British Horse Society (BHS) said the stats were "extremely concerning".

"This is especially alarming for horse riders, cyclists, and other vulnerable road users, who may be at a greater risk of an accident due to the increased speed of vehicles on these roads," a BHS spokesman told *H&H*, adding that the charity is committed to creating awareness about passing horses safely on the roads.

"The number of road incidents involving horses continues to rise. This follows the 68 equine deaths logged via the BHS Horse i app in 2022, with an additional 125 injured and 139 human injuries [news, 2 February]. Of these, 78% of incidents occurred because a vehicle passed too quickly.

"This highlights the need for drivers to reduce their speed when driving on rural roads to help prevent further incidents."

The RAC survey found that 48% believe that some 60mph limits on unclassified rural roads should be reduced.

"The recent increase in the proportion of drivers admitting to speeding on 60mph rural roads is extremely worrying as more people lose their lives every year in collisions on these roads than on any other," said Simon Williams of the RAC.

"It's even more concerning that this figure is now back to the all-time high of 48%.

"We think the Government should address the issue of fatalities on 60mph rural roads by advising roads authorities to reduce limits on the most dangerous stretches to more appropriate levels."

He added that in 2021, 253 people died in collisions where someone was speeding.

A Department for Transport spokesman told *H&H:* "While we have some of the safest roads in the world, we are committed to reducing road collisions by tackling dangerous driving.

"Local authorities have the power to set local speed limits, and we will always consider what additional measures can be explored to effectively enhance road safety."

And finally... reading

HORSES are able to distinguish between certain letters of the alphabet.

In a study published in *Animals*, and carried out by Clara-Lynn Schubert, Barbara Ryckewaert, Carlos Pereira and Tetsuro Matsuzawa, it was found four out of five horses learned to differentiate between five letters: O, B, Z, V, and X.

The researchers believe studying the equine visual system will improve understanding of horses' perception and cognition, and links with learning.

"The system used opens the window to a range of questions about horse cognition," they wrote. **EJ**

Pictures by Andrew Sydenham and Schubert et al

▲ MANNERS
An *H&H*-er asked the American Quarter Horse Association a question, to no avail. Ah. The American Paint Horse Association has a similar acronym. Mother always told us to mind our Ps and Qs...

▲ READING
Talking of letters, a study has found horses can distinguish between five (below, right) O, B, Z, V, and X. Add A, K, E, H, C, M and F, and we think they'll learn a dressage test far better than we can...

▲ PRACTICE
Top marks to Tim and Jonelle Price, who took a ditch to the worlds to practise. We think this could catch on. Anyone planning to take their own bank to Hickstead?

GOOD WEEK
BAD WEEK

▼ MARTINGALES
A non-horsey man tried to make a suggestion about his wife's horse. "Maybe he needs one of those bird things," he said. "A nightingale?" Ah, the elusive call of the lesser standing nightingale.

▼ FIGHTING
A social media post states that one is in an arena with a hunter (with rifle), 50 hawks, 10 crocodiles, seven buffalo, 10,000 rats, 15 wolves, five gorillas, four lions and three bears; which two would you pick to defend you. The real question is, who let that many in the warm-up?

▼ SUCCESS
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BEING INCLUSIVE

WITH reference to your feature "Hidden differences" (9 February), my son, now 18, was diagnosed at age three with sensory processing disorder (a lack of proprioception). This caused him issues with balance and coordination, reading and writing.

He started riding at age nine when he had sufficient balance and coordination, and when a spell of benign rolandic epilepsy was under control.

Learning to ride contributed to his physical progress, but it also taught him an emotional empathy, which was equally important. He progressed through Pony Club and competed, but although he was encouraged, he could never equal the results of his peers.

My son doesn't recognise his "hidden difference" because he has coping strategies, but as his parents, we see his daily struggles. Riding has brought so much to his life, but I do hope that as equestrians, we can become more inclusive and that some concessions can be granted.

Emma Storm
Chagford, Devon

> *"I hope we equestrians can become more inclusive"*
>
> EMMA STORM

HAVE YOUR SAY

Do you feel strongly about an issue in the horse world? Write to *H&H* at hhletters@futurenet.com and please include your full name and address.

Learning to ride has helped Rafe physically and emotionally

WELFARE IS KEY

WHAT a superb article from Carl Hester about equine welfare at all levels (opinion, 9 February). I agree when he says that "people have access to excellent raw material, but that does not mean all those riders have the skills to produce every horse" which, as he says, can lead to "confusion and injury".

I'm sure many mistake confidence in their abilities for competence in their abilities, but decisions will be made with good intent. I wonder if some of the pressure around having a goal and being competitive

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SHOWING INTERVIEW
PRODUCER WILL MORTON

Plus Opinion from Pammy Hutton and Graham Fletcher, dressage from the para winter championships, showjumping from Doha, hunting for the first time and more

Pictures by LRG Photography, Peter Nixon and Andrew Sydenham

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comes from the cost as you head into affiliated – maybe people feel the horse owes them a certain level of performance, or maybe it's about wanting to look progressive as they go on display to others.

If we thought more about personalising our victories and setting goals in the same way, we'd find a healthier, happier environment for ourselves and our horses. For me, the focus is on going out, staying safe, being pleased with the horse's effort – irrespective of the score sheet – and enjoyment. Anything more is a bonus.

Claire Anderson
Hutton, Essex

AN UNFAIR SYSTEM?

I RECENTLY entered Oasby BE100open – at 12.57pm, 57 minutes after the entries opened. I had to do this from my work computer, but checked the entries when I got home at 6pm, when pretty much all the classes were full.

I have serious concerns about the fairness of this first come, first served system. If I'd not been able to get to a computer, I would not have been able to enter this event – full-time workers cannot always stop work to do this.

But the ballot system puts everyone on a level footing. Every full member pays the same subscription and deserves the same chance to enter, and the ballot system achieves this.

Caroline Dyer
Ashbourne, Derbys

Stuart Buntine, events director of Oasby organisers BEDE, replies: ***"With the ballot system, many riders may miss the opportunity to compete if the event is oversubscribed. Based on the current balloting process, this will often mean that grassroots classes will be the first to be balloted, as international, advanced, and intermediate classes are given priority.***

"With the first come, first served system, each class has its own quota for entries, based on the advertised schedule. This means that competitors at all levels have the same access and same level of priority.

"Great thought was given to the time at which entries open – noon was chosen on the basis that many competitors could take a break at that time, thereby working towards giving the maximum number of competitors equal priority for entries.

"As organisers, we're fully open to suggestions and ideas from competitors on how we can make this system fairer and more advantageous for all involved."

The *H&H* Quiz

1) How many senior championship medals had Laura Collett won before the Tokyo Olympics?
2) Seven of the last nine Cheltenham Gold Cup winners were trained in Ireland. Can you name either of the two British victors?
3) In *The Archers*, name the pair of working horses that Dan Archer retired at Brookfield Farm.

Answers from 16 February
1) Night Line **2)** Three
3) Scotland.

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X-rays don't show the full picture

Anna Ross on how we can train our horses to be healthy, happy athletes

OPINION

SPRING is coming! Our first foal has been born already, and we're excited about backing the new influx of horses as well as the show season getting underway.

As we breed so many young horses, I take great interest in the importance of raising sound, healthy athletes. At this time of year there are always social media posts criticising young horses being started too early by "over-ambitious" riders.

However, there is much misconception out there about what keeps a young horse healthy in body and mind. There are also some super resources available, and peer-reviewed scientific research, to help us do the best for our horses and dispel some myths, too.

There seems to be some misunderstanding about the concept of a horse being "brought on slowly". This should mean a carefully developed young equine athlete, not an under-muscled, weak and gangly horse that has no residual fitness or manners.

If a horse looks like a llama chewing a wasp at six years old, it's probably been brought on badly, not slowly. The fundamental principle of dressage is to help the horse rebalance, by taking its weight onto its hindlegs to carry a rider. It is totally appropriate for a four-year-old to be able to do a prelim test with a well-balanced, correctly sized rider.

We encourage our children to play sports and run around to be fit and healthy – so why not our horses? If young horses are ridden in balance, and over different terrain, enjoying a good canter on the fields and tracks, and learning about the outside world, they will be mentally and physically able to cope with the demands of sport in later life.

FUTURE SOUNDNESS

IT'S also the time of year where a lot of horses change hands, and sales are strong despite the economic climate.

Anna Ross is an international grand prix dressage rider who has represented Britain on numerous occasions.

Great emphasis is put on X-rays for sales but a horse is made up of so much more than just bones. We breed and see horses through from foals to international grand prix, and there are myriad things that can ensure a horse will have a sound and healthy life that are nothing to do with its X-rays.

Is the rider going to be in balance? Is the horse going to suffer repetitive strain because the rider wants to over-practise? Will it be well shod? Will its nutritional needs be met?

I'd be very interested to know how many top grand prix horses have clean X-rays.

Dressage riders tend to be perfectionists so can often be tempted to over-train, increasing the risk of repetitive strain injuries. Many injuries to tendons and ligaments tend to be chronic, rather than acute, in dressage horses.

There is now some great technology that logs your schooling session, records your work on each rein and gait and counts your transitions, showing it all on an app on your phone. It can be very revealing, and interesting to find out what you are actually doing, as opposed to what you think you are doing. This can help the over-practiser adjust their training to include less repetition.

It is "totally appropriate" for a four-year-old, like Fever Tree, pictured with Dannie Morgan in 2022, to compete with a well-balanced rider, says Anna

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CLEAN SPORT

BD, PLEASE DITCH THE CDS

FINALLY, a plea: British Dressage, please switch to music files instead of CDs for freestyle tests. Not only is CD technology 40 years out of date, it's so disappointing for competitors when their CDs are not compatible with the venue's system and don't play – as happened at a recent regional championship.

The technology we use must develop at a healthy rate, like our horses. **H&H**

● ***Do you agree with Anna? Have you ever used technology to track your riding and training? Tell us about your experience at hhletters@futurenet.com***

Picture by kevinsparrow.co.uk

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‘We’re not seaside landladies’

Stuart Hollings praises LIHS and makes the case for winter showing

OPINION

WOW! This was my immediate reaction on walking into the London ExCeL building for the first time to watch the New Horizon Plastics Heritage supreme mountain and moorland (M&M) final at the London International Horse Show (LIHS) in December.

Everywhere was lighter and more spacious than at Olympia, where this competition was held from 1978 to 2019. Competitors were also full of praise for the excellent “all under one roof” facilities, including the lovely warm stables.

This final stands out from the crowd with its unique four-judge system: the two performance scores are teasingly revealed after each individual show, which leads to much speculation building up to the afternoon presentations. I personally enjoy analysing the full mark sheets a few days later.

The old chestnut that specialist breed judges are not used enough was mooted again. My response is as always: the consensus of opinion among the competitors is that they prefer to go under those who have the experience of judging all the breeds.

Lucy Glover’s charge Castle Kestrel became the 13th Connemara to lift the coveted title on a total score of 185/200. Not only did they secure the top mark from three of the judges but also won by a nine-point margin. I’m not sure if this is a record but it’s the most convincing victory in recent years.

Another young producer and an “Olympia” first-timer, Victoria Harker, finished runner-up aboard the sole Welsh section A representative, Dukeshill Pearly Spencer. Very much on form, 18-year-old Victoria also trained last October’s show pony of the year, Ardenhall Blenheim.

Lucy Glover’s nine-point lead on Castle Kestrel at London marks the “most convincing victory in recent years”, says Stuart Hollings

Stuart Hollings is a well-known and respected judge in the UK and abroad. He previously produced and showed a myriad of show ring winners and champions.

Both Lucy and Victoria are better known for their successes in the plaited ranks so it must have been even more rewarding to beat the M&M experts in their specific field. Interestingly both riders also come from a racing background: Lucy’s father Jerry was fifth in the 1976 Grand National and Geoff Harker has been a trainer for 22 years.

YEAR-ROUND SPORT

THE exciting news that 20 extra showing classes will be staged at this year’s LIHS – allowing more competitors to enjoy the Christmas experience – has caused a stir. I consider this move to be a window of opportunity for the struggling post-pandemic showing industry.

It’s also encouraging to witness the LIHS, Association of Show and Agricultural Associations (ASAO), British Show Pony Society (BSPS) and British Show Horse Association (BSHA) all working together to promote equine showing.

The BSHA Rising Stars series and BSPS cradle and nursery stakes classes now have a major finale in the capital, alongside an inaugural BSPS Heritage lead-rein working sports pony class. The five BSPS performance finals, which incorporate freestyle displays to include required movements, will also be real crowd pleasers.

Consequently I was surprised that my fellow columnist Katie Jerram-Hunnable was not as enthusiastic (comment, 12 January), believing that competitors and horses need a break.

Other disciplines such as dressage and showjumping continue during the winter and the BSPS presided over an active winter circuit some years ago that was a godsend for novice ponies moving up a gear and new combinations gaining experience.

A leading professional summed up the situation most succinctly: “We are not seaside landladies who can afford to shut up shop after a busy summer season!”

> *“An active winter circuit is a godsend for novice ponies”*

One could also argue that having an additional major showing event on the circuit may persuade enthusiasts who chase qualifiers and points during the summer months to throttle back somewhat and view the bigger picture with a more strategic campaign in place.

Whatever your plan, enjoy the 2023 season! **H&H**

● ***Do you like the idea of winter showing? Let us know at hhletters@futurenet.com***

Picture by Peter Nixon

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Hector jumps his top ride, Dynasty, in the outdoor arena at his Hampshire base

Hector Payne

The rising British star finished on the podium at Pau five-star last year and hopes to take Badminton by storm this spring. *Pippa Roome* meets him to find out more about his plans

A BROKEN nose and a lost tooth don't always foretell the start of a beautiful relationship, but so it is proving for Hector Payne and his top ride, Dynasty.

"He was a seven-year-old and it was perhaps his first day trotting after coming back in," says Hector, remembering back to that occasion at William Fox-Pitt's yard. "I'd taken him for a walk round the roads, then William liked us to trot a few laps of the school.

"He got to the wheelbarrow, whipped round and chucked me off. He jumped a showjump for fun, then I caught him and got back on. He went to do exactly the same thing again, but this time I was ready and because I stopped him whipping round, he threw his head up so hard he broke my nose and knocked my tooth out."

It wasn't untypical behaviour for the young Dynasty – known as Raffles – but that's why Hector gained the ride.

The Dutch warmblood was imported by Olivia Craddock as a four-year-old and made his way into Vicky Tuffs and Andrew Williams' yard as part of their GHF Equestrian business, before being sold to William as a six-year-old.

"He was always naughty and I always seem to end up riding the naughty ones," says Hector, who was based with William at the time. "I was very lucky getting the ride permanently – it sounds awful to say that because of William's accident – but it was more the fact he was never William's favourite because he was naughty, he'd be stupid at events, he's never liked dressage.

"Then William took him to Osberton for the seven-year-old championships – he grew up that week and finished third. William said he was a completely different horse. Then he had his accident."

Just weeks later at Le Lion d'Angers, William suffered a head injury that affected his memory.

"That week of Osberton doesn't seem to exist in his mind," says Hector. "He came back and all he could remember was Raffles being naughty, so he was happy for me to ride him."

Hector took the grey to Tattersalls for the under-24 CCI2* (now CCI3*-L) in May 2016 and finished third.

"At the end, William said: 'You've gone rather well this weekend, I think you should keep the ride.' So it sort of went from there."

DYNASTY'S co-owners are Hector's grandparents on his mother Sophie's side, Judith and Jeremy Skinner, who are long-term owners of top event horses, including William's 2005 Burghley winner Ballincoola, whom they owned with Hector's father Michael. They still own Dynasty alongside David and Margie Hall; David was a solicitor with Jeremy.

"I remember at 10 or 11 going to South of England to watch William compete one of Granny's horses," says Hector, now 31. "I was a proper fanboy and got my programme signed. I decided that day I was going to be an event rider and that never changed. I always loved horses, but back then, growing up, I was big into hunting."

The second of four brothers, Hector grew up with ponies, with early help from Mark and Tanya Kyle, and Matt and Milla Lanni. He first tasted international competition with French Gypsy (Kevin).

"Kevin had legs too short for his body, so he was never going to get a good dressage mark, but he was a finish-on-dressage-score machine," says Hector.

"Everyone thought he was push-button, but Tanya always said she'd like to see them even get on, canter across the field and get off again without falling off, because he was quirky. I learnt masses on him."

Hector would have liked to leave school at 16 to event, but his parents said they'd support him through university and – with degree-holders William Fox-Pitt and Milla Lanni as examples – he studied sport and social sciences at Bath and kept four horses with Tim and Toni Warren.

"I spent more time riding young ones for Tim than I did going to uni and I

Pictures by Andrew Sydenham

After starting out as riding the “naughty” horse of the yard, Hector’s partnership with Dynasty (pictured) has blossomed, leading to his best five-star finish last autumn

> *“I was very lucky getting the ride on him permanently”*
> HECTOR ON TOP RIDE DYNASTY

The team (L-R): Clare Egginton, Robbie Young, Bethany Hunt, Hector and Yasmin Olsson Sanderson with dogs Billy and Benjy

Hacking out eight-year-old Charlie Foxtrot, a three-star ride who is strong but “unbelievably talented and can do it all”

"She watches every single lesson I have": Hector is pictured with fiancée and fellow event rider Yasmin Olsson Sanderson

With Charlie Foxtrot: "As he's nearly 18hh, he needs time to build the foundations. Once he gets it, he'll be really serious"

calculated the work I needed to do to get my 2:1 degree," he smiles. "I was of the mindset that if I got lots over 60%, I'd worked too hard."

Leaving Bath, Hector was due to do a summer from the farm at home before heading to William's, but it was "one of those years when everything went lame" so he rang William and started early.

What did he learn at William's?

Horse fitness – "I think that's an element that's been lost since we haven't had long format" – and the opportunity to learn from others, such as William's long-term head girl Jackie Potts, and make connections with "brilliant vets, farriers, physios" spring quickly to his mind.

He adds: "You had to be never afraid to ask. Jackie used to say, 'You ask far too many questions, stop asking me questions you wouldn't ask William' and I'd call her bluff and ask William."

Hector was ready to make the leap to his own yard when William had his accident, so he stayed an extra year and has no regrets. He only had two horses at William's and it looked a big step to try to fill a yard, so he then spent a year with Ian and Heidi Woodhead, where he could benefit from Ian's dressage expertise and rent more stables as his string grew.

> *"The goal is to jump a double clear and hopefully get a top-15 result"*
>
> HECTOR ON HIS AIMS FOR BADMINTON

From there, he moved to his 20-box yard near Andover five years ago.

"I'm very fortunate to pay the largest mortgage ever – my grandparents on my dad's side helped me get a deposit and we have to make sure we're earning enough to keep paying the mortgage," he says.

To help pay the bills, Hector keeps six to eight horses for other riders, including Phoebe Hughes, who was fifth at the young rider Europeans last year.

Hector works alongside his fiancée, Norwegian rider Yasmin Olsson Sanderson. He proposed on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco during a trip with fellow British five-star rider Tom Jackson and his wife Sabrina in January.

HECTOR'S first five-star was Burghley 2018, where he and Raffles jumped clear across country and the horse was then withdrawn with a small injury. The pair were ready for Badminton 2020 when Covid hit so headed to Pau that autumn, where Hector missed his line in one of the venue's notoriously tricky water fences, but still finished near the time.

With no Badminton in 2021, Hector was considering Luhmühlen when he broke his leg in a fall from another horse. He did two one-day events that autumn and considered Pau, but in reality he "was very much a passenger" and couldn't walk after those competitions.

"It wasn't maybe the most sensible thing, but for my head as much as anything I wanted to have done it. I didn't want everything cancelled in the lead up to Badminton last year and I'd done three events in 12 months."

Badminton last spring was "a three-year pipe dream". Raffles lost his back end jumping out of The Quarry, so Hector was 20 seconds down early on and focused on completion. The horse had a small but sore speedy cut after cross-country, but they finished, albeit with three showjumps down.

"I always said, 'I don't want to go and just jump around having done five-stars already with him,' but that's slightly where it ended up. But looking back, even now I'm still working on strength in my right leg and it was an unbelievable achievement to complete my first Badminton," he says.

"This year, I can have a brilliant go and if I end up tipping off cross-country while I was taking a chance, that's the sport."

With that goal in mind, Hector decided on Pau last year rather than Burghley. He hoped he'd be competitive and Raffles' previous Burghley was on his mind.

"If he'd picked up another injury at Burghley and couldn't go to Badminton, that would be devastating, whereas if he manages to go to Badminton and Burghley this year and has a little niggle, he doesn't owe me anything because he's achieved everything I want," he says.

At Pau, everything came together. Hector is on the World Class Podium Pathway squad and both Dickie Waygood and Chris Bartle were "extremely helpful", backed up by Hector's fiancée Yaz, who "watches every single lesson I ever have".

Tom McEwen asked Hector's aim during a round of golf the day before the trot-up. The answer was to finish on his dressage score and a top-10 finish.

"Tom said, 'If you finish on your dressage, you'll come top five' and I was like, 'Yeah, my dressage isn't that good.' But it turns out Tom was right – I try not to think about the fact that had I gone three seconds faster on the cross-country, I could have won," he says.

Nonetheless, third was a result that "makes all those long hours worthwhile".

"I was fortunate to take the ride from William, but there is always a voice in the back of your head going, 'How good could this horse have been if someone else had been riding him?' So I felt it was the result the horse deserved as much as anything."

Now, it's full steam ahead to Badminton. Dynasty is swimming alongside his gallop work – an approach they first tried for Pau – so should be fitter than last year.

"The goal is to jump a double clear, be a bit faster across country and hopefully get a top-15 result. If I can scrape any more than that, brilliant, but you never know," says Hector.

Watch this space. **H&H**

NEXT WEEK **Showing producer Will Morton**

Pictures by Andrew Sydenham

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Ground jury member

Agy Mossakowska on collapsing judges' chairs and the welcoming nature of the equestrian community

My parents met in the late 1970s in a student riding club in Poland. It was still a communist country, so horses were owned by the state and based in national studs, with access to riding very limited. Going to that club as a kid was my first contact with horses.

At the start of the 1990s, the political scene changed and I started riding properly at about 10, when private riding schools were first established. We didn't have ponies, we learnt to ride on big horses, so some of my first experiences were quite traumatic!

My younger brother Jan was a member of the national junior and young rider teams, so I was heavily involved in his sports career.

> *"As a rider, I wasn't super-competitive, I was better in training than in competition. So as a judge, I understand that things can go wrong"*

I competed in dressage and trained in eventing, but I wasn't super-competitive. I was better in training than on the day of competition. So as a judge, I understand that things can go wrong. I always try to put something in the comments to encourage the rider. It's just a mark for the performance on the day and doesn't mean you're a bad or good rider. What makes you as a rider is how you treat your horses, whether you're kind and grateful to have contact with those amazing animals.

When I was in my early teens, my dad Tomas was on the organising committee for the driving World Championships in Poland. I helped in the event office, using English for the first time outside the classroom. When I saw all the glamour of the international sport, I thought, "I want to be that lady wearing the hat." That's how it all started.

I qualified as a dressage judge in Poland and did my first course for the basic level of national judging while still at university, which led to climbing the ladder and international qualifications. In Poland, you shadow more experienced judges. I'm now a Level Two judge, so I can be president of the ground jury up to three-star in eventing, or a member of a four-star ground jury. The system allows us to learn from more experienced judges.

There's a long way to go but I hope to keep progressing. There's always something interesting to learn about horses and about the connection between horses and humans.

Once, I was scribing for a judge, he was rocking in his chair and it collapsed. He was under the table and he said, "I can't see anything but I don't want to get up in case the horse spooks. So you have to tell me what they're doing." That was probably the first time I judged on my own.

I came to Britain in 2014, initially for a few years, but I soon knew I wasn't going back. Being based in Britain but classed as a foreign official helps me get invitations, but I think it also works for my fellow judges because I communicate in a different way. I think people find me quite direct and to the point.

In Poland, I wouldn't get the chance to judge so many horses or to judge the best in the world. There, I was judging a lot of Polish and German riders. In Britain, people ride slightly differently and the contact between riders and horses is a bit different. The British way is closer to my heart.

I like watching people riding horses. I find it fascinating seeing people ride in a harmonious, elegant way, the connection they build with horses and how they progress. It comes naturally to me to assess the performance.

I have a strong feeling of the responsibility of being an official – riders have put a lot into training, both financially and mentally. So when making decisions, you have to be fair to first the horse, then the rider and all the other competitors. Whenever I have to give a yellow card, I try to make a point about why a rule exists and how it influences horse welfare.

I started to work for the British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) three years ago. I really enjoy it because every day is different. I'm a liaison manager, so my job is to make sure that all the parts of the company are working smoothly. It helps with my officiating because when I say I work for BETA, it is a recognised brand and maybe we'll start a conversation about standards for body protectors, or what we do with horse feed.

Wherever you go, you find that connection and camaraderie with horsey people and there are always things to talk about. When I moved here, it was the equestrian community that helped me find my way and feel welcome as a foreigner in a strange country.

I would recommend being an official. We need new blood and it's an amazing journey. If you are still competing, it will help your riding. You have opportunities to see great horses, watch fabulous performances, make friends with interesting people from around the world and hear what our most experienced officials say about the top horses and riders.

It's a very worthwhile way of developing yourself and your horsemanship. **H&H**

● ***As told to Pippa Roome***

Picture by Simon Finlay Photography

NEXT WEEK
Pioneering female farrier Sarah Mary Brown

Critical moments

A foaling should be – and usually is – a hugely positive moment. But what if things don't go to plan? *Lucy Collins CertAVP(ESM) MRCVS* explains what can happen and how to plan to avoid the worst

EQUINE
EMERGENCY
SERIES

THERE are many conditions that can affect a mare while pregnant and around the time of birth (periparturient). Thankfully, the majority will carry their foal to term uneventfully. But what if that is not the case?

To grasp what can go wrong at and around the time of foaling, we must first understand what is "normal".

Foaling can be broken down into three stages:

- **First-stage labour.** This is characterised by the development of coordinated uterine contractions. The increased uterine pressure pushes the chorioallantoic sac (the fluid-filled sac in which the foetus sits) against the relaxing cervix so that continual, gradual dilation occurs. Clinical signs of first stage labour vary, but typically may look like signs of mild colic.
- **Second-stage labour.** This is marked by the rupture of the chorioallantois and discharge of the fluid (waters breaking). This occurs when the fetlocks and sometimes knees are at the level of the external cervical opening.

Strong abdominal contractions follow to help with the expulsion of the foal. Often, one forelimb precedes the other – this helps reduce the cross-sectional diameter of the foal's shoulders as they pass through the pelvis. The soles of the foal's hooves should be directed downwards and the foal's head should be in between the knees.

As the foal's thorax passes through the pelvis, the amnion (white membrane) surrounding the foal usually ruptures. If it is still over the foal's head at the time of delivery, it should be removed immediately to avoid the risk of suffocation. Second stage labour ends when the foal is delivered.

- **Third-stage labour.** This stage is marked by the expulsion of the foetal membranes/placenta after the foal has been delivered and should be complete within 30 minutes to three hours. Veterinary attention should be sought if this process is delayed, to avoid potentially life-threatening complications.

DEALING WITH DYSTOCIAS

MOST dystocias (difficult births) can be resolved fairly rapidly by brief manipulation and assisted vaginal delivery, but alternative options will need to be considered if resolution is not within 10-15 minutes. Given how important timing is with foalings, if in doubt, it is always better to ring for veterinary attention sooner rather than later.

Some of the most common difficult births and their management are as follows:

- **Dog sitter.** The head and front feet are presented correctly but the hind feet are caught at the level of the pelvic brim. The foetus needs to be pushed back into the uterus (retropulsion), so the hindlegs can be released. There is a high risk of a uterine tear with this presentation so immediate hospital referral is advised.
- **Lateral displacement of the head and neck**, also known as "neck back". This position is very difficult to correct and sadly foetal death is common. Hospital referral for correction is strongly advised.
- **Hock flexion.** The foal is in the posterior position, so presents "bum first". Correction is very difficult and there is a high risk of a uterine tear, rupture or both. The umbilical cord is also likely to be crushed prematurely, cutting off the oxygen supply to the foal. Immediate referral to a hospital is advised. The breech position is similar except there is bilateral hip flexion.

> *"If in doubt, it is always better to ring for veterinary attention sooner rather than later"*

- **Unilateral shoulder flexion.** One limb is retracted at the level of the shoulder, with the other limb and head in the normal position. It is usually very difficult to reach the affected limb. Retropulsion is required to gain access to the leg. Referral is advised.
- **Foetal oversize.** As this suggests, in some cases, the foal is simply too big to be delivered vaginally. Referral for controlled vaginal delivery, caesarean section or fetotomy (surgical removal of a dead foetus) may be required.
- **Foot nape posture.** One or both forelimbs are displaced over the top of the foal's head and consequently push against the roof of the vagina. Careful manipulation of the limbs is usually possible.

If left uncorrected, the foals' feet can protrude through the vaginal wall into the mare's rectum, creating a recto-vaginal fistula. This has significant implications for the mare's breeding prospects if not later corrected surgically.

- **Carpal flexion posture.** The forelimbs are flexed at the level of the knee. This is usually caused by a flexural limb deformity, preventing the foal from being able to extend

Any help by pulling must be timed with the mare's contractions

Pictures by Alamy

the limbs into the normal birth position. Referral is strongly advised. The prognosis for the foal as an athletic prospect is guarded if the deformities are this severe.

- **Red bag delivery.** This is premature placental separation as a result of abnormal breakage, which means the oxygen supply for the foal is cut off. A thick, red velvety membrane is seen at the vulva as the foal and placenta are delivered simultaneously.

Immediate intervention is needed to save the foal's life, as often it is too late by the time a vet has arrived. Phone your vet so they can talk you through the action required, but essentially it is to break the membrane immediately and pull the foal out to prevent asphyxiation.

The final stage of labour is the expulsion of foetal membranes and placenta, which shoud be kept to be examined by a vet

PERI-PARTURIENT EMERGENCIES

COMPLICATIONS around the time of birth can be challenging to diagnose as mares often present with non-specific clinical signs, such as colic. However, some of the more common problems encountered post-foaling, and the management and treatment involved, are as follows:

- **Uterine tear or rupture.** These are uncommon and may or may not be associated with a dystocia. Clinical signs usually present two to four days after foaling, typically with colic, depression, a high temperature and potentially vaginal discharge. Uterine tears can be difficult to diagnose, treatment can be medical and/or surgical and the prognosis is guarded.
- **Colic of gastrointestinal origin.** Different types of such colic can occur after foaling. Veterinary attention should be sought immediately if a mare presents with signs of colic post-foaling, however mild.

> *"Complications around the time of birth can be hard to diagnose, as mares often present with non-specific signs"*

- **Haemorrhage.** Minor bleeding post-foaling is normal, but severe bleeding can occur at that stage. Pre-partum bleeds can also occur (they are usually fatal).

Mares typically present post-foaling as anxious, sweating with pale mucous membranes and weakness. Bleeds usually arise from the uterine artery. Risk factors include age and a history of bleeds – such high-risk mares should not be rebred.

Call your vet immediately, keeping the mare as calm as possible while waiting to avoid rises in blood pressure. The prognosis is good if the bleed can be controlled. A blood transfusion may be required.

- **Metritis.** Infection of the uterus is fairly common. Risk factors are birth trauma and retained foetal membranes – a post-foaling veterinary clinical exam and examination of the placenta is essential. The mare usually presents one to two days post-partum with a high temperature and not eating. Treatment is targeted at removing any retained foetal membrane portions and controlling infection. Prognosis varies depending on how promptly treatment is instigated and breed predilection.
- **Uterine prolapse.** This is most likely to occur immediately after a dystocia and is readily apparent.

Immediate veterinary attention is required to replace the uterus. If treated promptly, this condition carries a good prognosis for future breeding.

- **Uterine torsion.** This is rare but occurs when essentially the uterus twists, compromising the foetus and mare. The mare will often present with colic-like signs. Treatment involves referral to an equine hospital for correction of the torsion, which may be via surgical or non-surgical means. Prognosis varies, but the mare and foal survival rate was found to be higher when torsions occurred at less than 320 days of gestation. **H&H**

NEXT WEEK **Pre-purchase exams: why they are not a matter of pass or fail**

Top tips

- Be prepared. If your mare has a Caslick's (or episiotomy, a surgical closure of part of the vulva to help prevent bacterial infections), ensure that it has been opened pre-foaling. Prepare your foaling box with copious clean lubrication, long arm rectal gloves, short latex gloves, plentiful clean foaling ropes and phosphate enemas if required for the foal.
- Mares often foal at night. Monitor your mare around the clock in the weeks running up to her due date.
- Start a timer on your phone at the onset of second stage labour to ensure you do not lose track of time. Pay attention to it. This can be vital if the mare is not progressing with labour normally.
- If there are no strong abdominal contractions or foetal parts visible 10 minutes after the mare's waters break, she may be experiencing difficulties. Contact your vet immediately.
- If pulling of the foetus is required, it must be in time with the mare's efforts, and by no more than two people pulling at one time.
- Avoid prolonged vaginal manipulation and repeated or incorrect instrument use, to prevent soft tissue trauma and for the mare's future reproductive health.
- Even without immediate complications, a full clinical exam of the mare and foal must be completed by a vet the day after foaling.
- The placenta should be removed from the stable as soon as possible and kept safely away from pests so it can be examined by experienced personnel or the vet post-foaling.
- Monitor your mare's temperature for several days post-foaling.

Far left: if a mare has an episiotomy it must be opened before she gives birth. Left: monitor a mare's temperature for several days after foaling

Pictures by Alamy, Lucy Merrell and Emma Houghton

Feeding a joint supplement preventatively can help to maintain good joint health for the future

A balanced feed ration is key year-round

Anything to add?

Dodson and Horrell explain the need for a tailored approach when it comes to feeding supplements

SUPPLEMENTS have been prominent in the equine feed industry for many years, offering additional support for a variety of horses and ponies across a spectrum of areas. The biggest question asked now is, to supplement or not to supplement? To answer that question, owners must think about their horse's individual needs, taking into consideration that there is no one-size-fits-all, and understanding the products that are available on the market.

WITH the winter weather comes many changes, both environmentally and nutritionally, but also behaviourally. Many horses can benefit from a supplement and, depending on their gender, behaviour and disposition, they might require support in cycles, during certain periods or year-round.

> *"Owners must think about their horse's needs – there is no one-size-fits-all"*

Certain herbs can support a mare in season

For example, mares' seasons are triggered by increasing daylight hours. They usually start in late February to early March and finish towards the end of August; however, some horses will cycle all year. Herbal ingredients that support mares during this time include St John's wort and chaste tree berries, which aid a correct hormonal balance, chamomile for its calming properties, and raspberry leaves and peony petals, which act similarly to oestrogen in the body, providing natural hormonal support.

LIKE all times of the year, it is important to ensure your horse's ration provides them with a healthy balance in vitamins and minerals with essential antioxidants. For some, winter is an ideal time to work towards a healthy body condition prior to spring and summer, even with a healthy weight loss as a goal, the key nutrients needed in their diet should never be compromised. Vitamin and mineral supplements are typically low in calories, making them an ideal choice for those requiring healthy weight loss.

DURING the winter, in times of colder temperatures, some horses can be prone to stiffness. Although joint supplements are commonly fed in winter to ward off aches and pains, they work to protect what is there, rather than rebuild what is lost. Therefore, by using them preventatively and consistently, they support the maintenance of joint fluidity for longer, in an attempt to stop the horse facing poor joint health in the future.

Herbal ingredients that support equine mobility include comfrey leaf, nettle, dandelion and burdock root, as they are rich in fibre and antioxidants but also support cell renewal, as well as joint and bone integrity. Celery seed can also be found in some herbal support supplements for its diuretic properties, as it is said to support healthy fluid balance in joints and soft tissue.

Dodson and Horrell's range of herbs and supplements have been carefully crafted based on scientific research to cater for all horses and ponies. Environmental, management and nutritional changes are bound to occur in line with the seasons, but support is always available. **H&H**

● ***For more information, contact the Dodson and Horrell helpline at helplineenquiries@dodsonandhorrell.com, call 01270 782223 or message via LiveChat at dodsonandhorrell.com***

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Compiled by Martha Terry. All properties were for sale at the time of going to print

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ESSENTIAL GUIDE
to the season
2023

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Pictures by Lucy Merrell, Alamy and Getty. Illustration by David Stoten

Trusting the science

Horsemanship might be as much about science as feel, discovers *Lucy Elder*, as top riders explain how data, stats and tech inform their competitive performance and their horses' welfare

LEONARDO DA VINCI saw art and science as symbiotic – the understanding and research into one, elevating and informing the other.

When it comes to horsemanship, the lines between art and science are inextricably linked. The art and beauty of connection and performance, with the science of working with living beings – equine and human.

With welfare and marginal gains the two top priorities in equestrian sport, could a lean towards science and maths prove the recipe to improve both wellbeing and performance?

"THE first thing that you have to address with all of this is why would we use numbers?" says Sam Watson, world team silver medal-winning Irish event rider and founder of data analytics firm EquiRatings.

"For riding a horse, which is such an art form, why would we ever need to analyse through numbers what we're doing? Because it's not going to help us put our heels down, it's not going to improve our hands or our seat, or even potentially our accuracy.

> *"Improving one thing by 10% isn't high performance; improving 10 things by 1% is"*
>
> OLYMPIC EVENT RIDER ANDREW HOY

"Now the answer is that in the same way that standing on a weighing scale does not help you lose weight, looking at your accounts at the end of the year does not help you sell more. Equally, a chef looking at the number of dishes that he's sold or the price that people are willing to pay for things doesn't help him cook better.

"But without that information, without analysing the output, you're just working in a cloud. You don't have a vision or any kind of feedback as to how successful you are. Yes, riding horses is an art, but we have to audit it."

Sam explains how using data analysis of his own showjumping performance gave him fresh focus on how to improve his results.

"I was in the bottom 10% of athletes at four- and five-star level [in terms of showjumping records] because I was jumping clear less than 20% of the time. The average is about 33% and the good riders were around 50% to 60%. That helped me train with a bit more purpose and focus," he says.

Sam's aim was to make himself very accurate. He used raised canter poles and would set himself specific targets.

"It served a couple of purposes, including helping me with pressure," he says. "When you know that your goal is in reach if you don't mess up this final jump, you learn how to cope and you learn how to win. It's when you're coming down to the last fence at a three-day event that you have to learn to control all those thoughts in your head."

That accountability and mindset shift followed to competition – it was in his mind when making decisions about entering events and keeping him focused in the course-walk and warm-up. It worked. By 2016/17, Sam was showjumping clear 75% of the time.

Sam also uses an Alogo sensor as part of his training, which measures the horse's heart rate, speed, jump trajectory, balance, plus stride patterns, length and height. This translates any training session into a complete data picture, meaning riders can put a number on feelings, such as the canter they want in the competition arena.

Showjumper David Deillon devised the system, which is now being used by showjumpers, dressage riders, event riders, vets, national federations and in FEI safety research. A sensor fits on a horse's girth and feeds data to a connected app, which riders can view on their smartphone and share with other members of their team.

"From the riders' perspective, there are a few ways that they use it," says David, explaining that one aspect for which riders find it useful is measuring different approaches in training. He gives the

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2023

example of using it while testing different bits at home as an objective measure. He also highlights how it can be used from a wellbeing side to spot subtle differences to a horse's normal way of going, such as shortened stride patterns.

"I think it's also interesting to see the evolution of the young horses. We see the shape of the jumps, we can look at patterns, their technique, and it brings new perspectives of how you can use the data," he says.

That ability to measure endless data is the crux of several ongoing studies, including one on how horses become fatigued across country.

"We can see every millisecond of how the horse moves over the fence and if, for example, a horse is jumping a bit flat or a bit too high," he says. "There is no limit on information or parameters – we can go back 20 strides before and see how the horse behaves at every single stride."

Technology, David predicts, will have an increasing part to play in horse sport.

"It's something that we see an increase of interest from riders, coaches. I think it's one of the last sports [to embrace] technology, so we are a bit late if we compare it to Formula One or basketball or running," he says, adding "the trend is going in the right direction.

"But we will never replace the feeling of the rider. We never replace the vet, we never replace the coach.

"I think to improve the wellbeing of the horse, to improve the training and go more direct to the solution, we need technology. Especially in our sport, because we have an animal, it's even more important to have such technology in a way, because it gives the horse a voice."

Eight-time Olympian Andrew Hoy uses analysis to improve his performance as "one part of a complete programme"

EIGHT-TIME Olympian and multiple CCI5*-winning event rider Andrew Hoy enlists the help of equine biomechanics specialist, vet and former grand prix dressage rider Dr Rachel Murray as part of his training.

"Dr Murray is one part of a complete programme – there isn't one thing that fixes all, that's for sure. Her speciality is in relation to the wellbeing of horses and also the biomechanics of the way horses work," he says.

"There is no one formula for every animal in my stable. Every horse is an individual, the same way every person is an individual, with their own personality and health needs. It's more about making a tailor-made programme for each horse. We spend a lot of time discussing the wellbeing of each horse and have many conversations where I say, 'This is what I am feeling, can you tell me what you are seeing?'"

Andrew again stresses that success is not down to one part in isolation, but the complete picture, from the individual training of each horse, as well as stable management, farriery, feed, turnout and more. Biomechanics also feeds in strongly to the ethos at Fairfax Saddles, with whom Andrew also works and whose design and testing is underpinned by scientific research.

"What I am interested in doing is working with the horses that I have and the owners that I have to advance those horses to perform as well as they can. That is where I engage Dr Murray, in the same way I engage my farrier, my dressage coach, showjumping coach and cross-country coach," says Andrew, adding that at the centre of it all is the importance of good communication.

"It's a combination of everything. If you want to be competitive in high-performance sport and you can improve one thing by 10%, then that isn't high

Picture by Peter Nixon. Illustration by Emily Secrett-Hill

performance. It is about improving 10 things by 1% to get that improvement.”

FEEDBACK and communication is also a critical part of racehorse trainers Daniel and Claire Kübler’s ethos. The Küblers take a scientific approach to training racehorses, with horsemanship as the “foundation for everything”, and applying evidence-based practices and data analysis to all aspects of their enterprise for a “layer of deeper analysis and further insight” (news, 26 May 2022). This includes “bio-banding” (grouping by maturity rather than age), genetic testing, using an Equinity device to record vitals in real-time during training, and much more.

Their yard highlights the connections between science, welfare, results and good employment practices – as well as transparency and communication with owners.

> *“We need technology because it gives the horse a voice”*
>
> ALOGO FOUNDER DAVID DEILLON

“A lot of owners now haven’t necessarily grown up around horses, so they don’t actually know the ins and outs of horses in detail,” says Daniel. “So, for example, by showing them a knee X-ray of a horse that has mature, closed growth plates, it’s very visible, it’s very obvious. Whereas me saying, ‘Well, he’s a bit up behind and he’s not quite stretching in his movement,’ that’s not quantifiable in the same way.”

Multiple Paralympic, world and European gold medallist Sanne Voets employed a scientific approach in her preparations for Tokyo with Demantur RS2 NOP (Demmi).

The Dutch rider enlisted the help of Dr Carolien Munsters in her acclimatisation and cooling techniques ahead of travelling to Japan, which involved hiring an indoor arena and industrial heating fans for two weeks.

They measured a range of data on the first and last days, and the results paid off in both medals – two golds and a team silver – and, crucially, the horse’s wellbeing.

Sanne took a thermometer “pill”, while Demmi wore a non-invasive device on his tail, to record their temperatures in real time. They were weighed at the start and end of training sessions, to measure how much water they lost, and the composition of their sweat was also measured.

As they acclimatised, their starting temperature lowered and it took them longer to reach a higher temperature. On the first day, Demmi lost 16 litres of water in an hour – down to 12 on the final day. The sweat became more dilute, as their bodies adapted to become more economical, which in turn helped inform the electrolyte feeding decisions.

The preparations also offered a mental boost – seeing evidence in numbers offered reassurance that the process was working even when it felt hard. In Tokyo, the data showed how quickly Demmi adapted to the conditions and that preparation translated to the feeling Sanne had in the saddle.

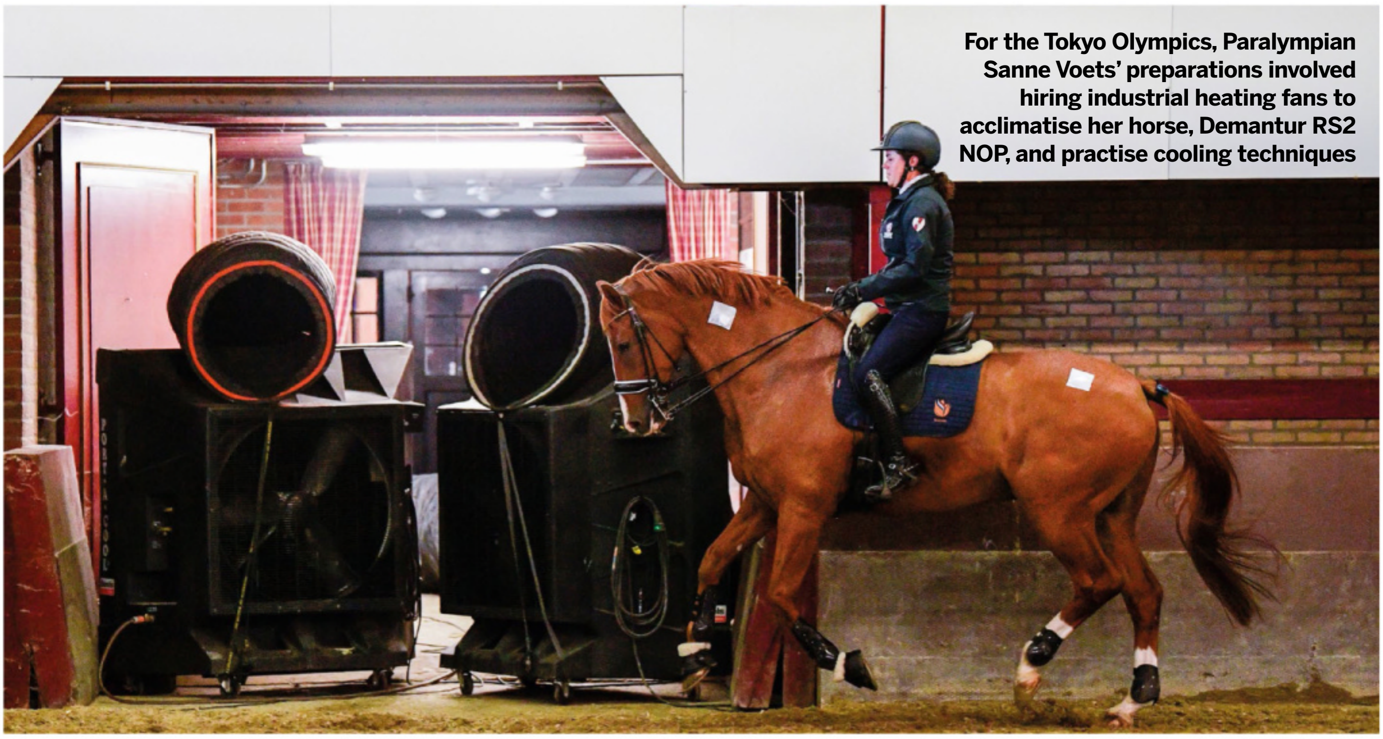
But while the evidence looked good, Sanne adds that trusting in it on the first day of competition was the “hardest part”.

X-rays can be used not only to help diagnose injury but to show the stage of a horse’s growth plates, which indicate his readiness for training

“You have all these thoughts, like, ‘I did something no one else did, and I think it was right but what if it doesn’t work?’ You try to control every detail in the weeks and months running up to those Games,” says Sanne. “Then there’s that moment where you have to let it all go – trust the process and trust that you did all you could and that it was the right decision.”

It did pay off. And after the freestyle, the vet congratulated her as Demantur had the lowest measured skin temperature of any horse across the Olympics and Paralympics on leaving the arena.

“I’m convinced that science can help us take better care of our horses,” says Sanne. “I really believe that for us as riders, our first priority should always be to make sure that our horses are happy and healthy and fit, and we should do everything that lies within our power to guarantee that.” **H&H**



For the Tokyo Olympics, Paralympian Sanne Voets’ preparations involved hiring industrial heating fans to acclimatise her horse, Demantur RS2 NOP, and practise cooling techniques

Pictures by Alamy and Kathleen van Winden

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Carry on competing

The financial squeeze means many are rethinking the look of their competition season. *Becky Murray* finds out where to make savings and stay in the ring

WITH spring on the horizon, many equestrians are turning their thoughts to the competition season ahead – and how this might look this year. The cost-of-living crisis remains a major concern and for many this might mean making cut-backs and savings.

Whether you enjoy the occasional outing or you're a regular face on the circuit, we look at ways to make competing more wallet friendly – and find out what different memberships are on offer across the disciplines.

Alison Waller enjoys riding in British Dressage (BD) competitions with her 12-year-old gelding Little Bob and makes use of the BD club membership, costing £50 per year for her and Bob's registration.

"The club membership is really beneficial because this allows me to ride up to novice level, and I can also contest the prelim bronze league," she says, adding she can ride two Quest tests for the price of a normal BD test.

"Bob is a traditional cob and isn't ever going to be the flashiest dressage horse in the world, so the club membership suits our goals better. Normal BD tests can be around £25 per test depending on the venue, which is a lot of money for me, so doing Quest makes competing more affordable and means I can do more."

Alison sticks to local venues to save on fuel and brings a camping stove and kettle to make hot drinks and snacks.

"Catering at shows can be really expensive, and if there are, say, three of you, it really adds up. Being able to make a cup of tea or Pot Noodle, especially in the winter when it's cold, helps keep costs down that little bit," she says.

"I also try my best to buy second-hand show gear. I don't think I've ever bought a new show jacket."

ANOTHER way to save money is by basing your horse at a venue that hosts regular competitions and training. Cobham Manor in Kent runs both affiliated and unaffiliated competitions, and hosts a range of clinics, and the centre's event manager Sian Eadon says

The cost-of-living crisis is making many equestrians rethink their competitive ambitions and, for some riders, this season may look different to those gone by

From camping stoves and kettles to hampers filled with refreshments, bringing your own food and drink can help save money on competition day

> *"Some shows allow late entries for a fee, but by entering earlier you're saving money"*
>
> SIAN EADON, YARD MANAGER AT COBHAM MANOR

most liveries are grassroots riders who like to compete.

"We have parents who might have two children who want to have a go at everything, and keen amateurs who like to compete in dressage and showjumping most weekends. A large number of our liveries don't have lorries or trailers, and to hire transport adds on at least £100 a day, which isn't affordable if all you want to do is two jumping rounds somewhere," she says, adding the biggest way for riders to save money is by being organised.

"During the pandemic everyone had to enter affiliated competition in advance and for most centres this has continued. Some shows allow late entries for a fee or enter on the day, but by entering earlier you are saving money."

CHRIS ROSE formerly competed in British Eventing, but switched to unaffiliated owing to rising costs.

"I'm a long-distance lorry driver so I work away a lot, and my horse is on part livery during the week. By going unaffiliated, this frees up money that allows me to do another two or three events each season," he says, adding that riding clubs are another excellent way for riders to enjoy low-cost competition.

Chris is the training coordinator for Worcester & District Riding Club and explains that riding clubs offer access to quality coaches, at discounted prices.

"One week we might have a flatwork session with a grand prix dressage rider and another day we'll organise a jumping session with an advanced event rider. We use a number of local venues to give people the choice, lessons are an hour long and the groups are no more than three riders. This costs members less than £20 each per lesson," he says.

"It's about making things affordable for people. I'd recommend anyone to join their local riding club, whether you're doing an intro dressage test or you want to event, there's something for everybody. We hold around 10 competitions a year, many of which are qualifiers for the British Riding Clubs national championships."

Isle of Man-based rider Trish Halliwell takes advantage of British Eventing's GoBE offering, which allows her to compete her mare Chamonix Supernova without committing to a membership.

Keeping on top of routine horsebox maintenance both at home and twice a year at a garage will help pick up problems and avoid expensive repair bills

Pictures by Peter Nixon and Lucy Merrell

"Because of our location and there not being any BE events over here I'm not able to do too many events in a year, so it doesn't make sense to be a full member. But GoBe allows me to still compete at a couple each year," says Trish.

"It still is quite expensive by the time we add everything up with the travel, but I usually travel over with a friend to split the transport costs and we'll try to organise a few things for when we're there to make it more worthwhile. Last year we went to the BE at Solihull and while we were over my friend's daughter went to Pony Club camp."

Similarly, Gemma Stewart enjoys British Showjumping's club membership as her work and university commitments mean she is unable to compete regularly.

"I don't feel able to commit to a full membership, but it still allows me to participate. It also provides access to my local BS training academy, which is a really good benefit," explains Gemma, who won the 2022 Scottish branch club 90cm championship with Trefaes Aled.

"With club membership you compete in a league and your points are added up over the year, so you've got something to work towards and there's the opportunity to qualify for the national championships."

Above: Quest dressage competitions offer value for money for grassroots riders. Left: you could find a bargain second-hand – or buy once and buy well

Pictures by Alamy

ONE area all riders can save money is reviewing their transport options. Sharing diesel costs and travelling with friends, rather than taking two horseboxes to the same place, will work out more economical – and if you share travel and alternate between your transport modes, you'll both reduce your own vehicles' wear and tear.

Claire Barker of the Organisation of Horsebox & Trailer Owners (OHTO) recommends keeping vehicles well maintained to reduce repair bills: "It's simply checking over the vehicle at home, and making sure all the fluid levels are as they should be. It's also a good idea to have a garage check over the basics every six months to help pick things up before they go expensively wrong.

"We really recommend people carry a spare wheel so they can shop around and find tyres at the best price. A breakdown company can supply and fit at the roadside, but at that point you don't have much choice in what is going to be supplied,

The cost of membership

British Dressage

Full members can compete in any BD competition, from preliminary to grand prix. The competition structure offers pathways leading to area festivals, and regional, winter and national championships. Club members can compete in prelim bronze qualifiers, MyQuest and Team Quest competitions including Quest championships, plus combined training.

Full competing membership: £95 annual payment (plus £80 horse registration) or £8.50 per month (plus £7 monthly horse registration)
Three-month trial membership: £35 (plus £15 horse registration)
Winter membership (October to March): £55 (plus £55 horse registration)
*** BEST FOR BUDGET Club membership:** £35 (plus £15 horse registration)
Benefits and perks: third-party liability insurance and personal accident cover for full and club members, free legal advice helpline, training discounts, 20% discount membership for under 16s

British Showjumping

Full members can follow a pathway of their choosing with various leagues and championships on offer. Club membership caters for those who want to jump from 60cm up to 1m, and offers members a points league rather than prize money, with access to the national club championships.

Full jumping annual membership: £148 (plus horse registration fee starting from £86)
Six-month jumping membership: £85 (plus horse registration fee starting from £59)
Club membership: £30
*** BEST FOR BUDGET Day ticket:** £5
Benefits: third-party liability, access to training academies, two-year new member discount for British Riding Clubs and Pony Club members

British Eventing

Standard membership gives riders access to training and competitions up to novice level (including CCI2*), with different championships on offer, including the BE80 national championships and Badminton grassroots, regional championships, and the Novice Masters. The pay as you go option offers flexibility for those who perhaps compete less but still want to aim for regional championships, while GoBE runs from 80cm to 1m and offers riders an affordable alternative to compete – without the membership fee – however with no prize money or published record.

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you'll receive what's available and closest to the breakdown situation, and may end up paying more than you normally expect to."

Claire adds that ensuring you have breakdown cover is essential – and can save in the event something goes wrong.

"Yes it's an upfront cost, which I know people are trying to avoid, but if you have a breakdown and are not covered, the costs really are significant," she explains.

"The average cost for a service van attendance at roadside is around £300 for something that's a quick fix, but if the vehicle needs to be recovered and you need horse transport, it can go into thousands. So while people might think they're saving by cutting out the cost of breakdown cover, it could actually cost them more."

> *"If the vehicle needs to be recovered and you need horse transport, it can cost thousands"*
>
> CLAIRE BARKER OF THE OHTO ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BREAKDOWN COVER

Nobody ever said horses were a cheap hobby, but by cutting out unnecessary expenditure and doing your best to prevent costly problems arising, you can keep your competitive drive burning. **H&H**

Pictures by Action Replay Photography and Lucy Merrell

Top: sharing transport saves diesel costs and reduces wear and tear on two vehicles. Left: riding club competitions are comparatively affordable, with plenty of options and great camaraderie

The cost of membership

BE Introductory membership:
From £80 per year
Standard membership:
From £125 per year
Horse season ticket: from £74 per year
Pay as you go (PAYG): £30 membership fee and £30 horse season ticket, plus £10 PAYG run fee on top of entry fee
*** BEST FOR BUDGET GoBE:** free membership, £10 run fee, plus entry fee
Benefits: training options including The Howden Way regional academies, 40% membership discount for Pony Club and British Riding Clubs members for the first two years

British Riding Clubs

Riding clubs offer access to an array of training and competitions across the disciplines, including dressage, showjumping, showing, and horse trials, as well arena eventing, style jumping, riding tests and quadrille. Dressage runs from intro level to advanced medium, and jumping up to 1.10m, plus many clubs offer the opportunity to compete on teams and aim for the British Riding Clubs national championship.

Annual membership: around £30–40 (club dependent)
Benefits: third-party public liability insurance while taking part in BRC-organised activities, discounted training and competition entries

Showing societies

There are a huge number of showing societies, catering for different breeds and types of horses and ponies. These include the National Pony Society, British Show Pony Society, Sport Horse Breeding of GB, the Coloured Horse and Pony Society, and the Veteran Horse Society, to name a few.

Membership costs vary between the individual organisations, but as an example, the British Show Horse Association (BSHA) offers:

Full adult membership: £60 (plus £60 horse registration)
Associate membership: £40 (plus £45 horse registration)
Hunter-only membership: £40 (plus £35 horse registration)
Working show horse-only membership: £35 (plus £35 horse registration)
Junior member membership: £50 (plus relevant horse registration)
In-hand membership: £40 (no horse registration fee)
Day tickets: £20 for horse and rider combination

The full BSHA membership gives riders access to all BSHA accredited classes and Royal International Horse Show (RIHS) and Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) qualifiers. For riders not aiming to qualify for RIHS and HOYS, but who still wish to compete in BSHA accredited classes, the associate membership and day tickets offer a cheaper alternative.

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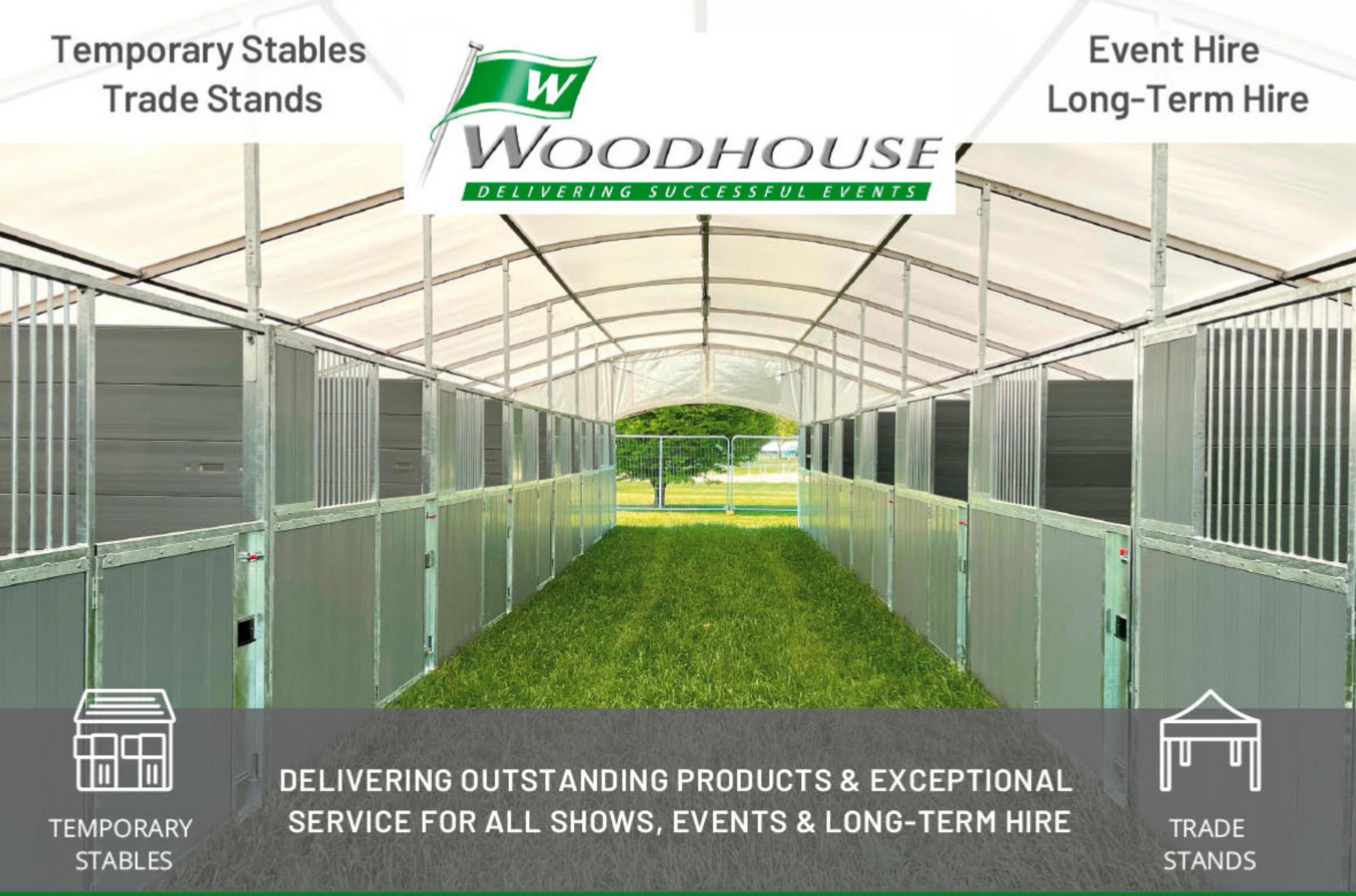
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Timing your peak

Success in sport often comes down to timing. *Polly Bryan* looks at how elite riders reach their peak at the right moment, and what we can learn from them

WHEN Lottie Fry and Glamourdale trotted down the centre line for their gold medal-winning test at the 2022 World Dressage Championships, that moment represented months of preparation and hard work, all timed to come together at just that moment.

Gold medals are borne out of skill, bravery, a lot of practice and a bit of luck. But, perhaps most of all, they are won through timing; precisely, the ability to time both the rider and the horse's peak performance to the exact moment it is needed.

"It is critical to be able to peak at just the right moment, and it's a crucial aspect of any athlete's preparation, for themselves and the horse," says Chris Bartle, the British eventing performance coach, who engineered the team's Olympic gold in 2021.

Timing an athletic peak is something the wider sports industry is starting to throw weight behind, and it is a highly scientific concept.

Dr Jamie Pringle, associate professor in exercise physiology and leadership development in sport at the University of Birmingham, describes it as "the science of muscle fatigue, of adaptation, strength, power, and endurance development; and just as importantly, it's the science of how those hard-earned gains are maintained."

It's a challenge for top athletes across all sports, but even more so for equestrian athletes, who have to ensure their horse's fitness and capability also peak at the required time. And it's not just Olympic riders. Whether you're aiming for the

ESSENTIAL GUIDE to the season *2023*

Blue Chip showjumping championships, or to compete at your local county show, you'll want to be on top form come the big day. So, how is it done?

THE first step is planning, to identify your goal and work out when you need your performance level to peak.

"We make an individual plan for each horse," explains Olympic gold medallist Oliver Townend. "We start by looking at how it felt towards the end of the previous season and set an overall goal for the next.

"I always have a discussion with owners about their ultimate aims. But in the end we always do what works for the horses' best interests."

Those with team aspirations will have that year's international championship as the ultimate goal; others may target two or more major events. It's important to identify the priorities, and those which will act as a means to get to that point.

"For a rider hoping to ride on a team, they have to be selected, so they have to produce a performance that's going to lead to that selection," Chris says, explaining that this can result in the horse having been over-prepared for the selection process, passing its peak before the championship arrives. Or, the temptation to mollycoddle a horse in the run-up can lead to lack of preparation. It's a fine line between proving yourself at the highest level, while ensuring you can go even better when the championship rolls round.

"We want horses to arrive at the championship in peak form, and that may involve competing them relatively close to it for ideal preparation," says Chris. "But each horse requires an individual programme – some may need more runs from a training and mental point of view, and maybe lower-level runs. Others may need something stronger to set them up for their peak. It's important, at those last preparatory competitions, to ride them in a way that provides a positive mental attitude."

Of course, there is no one-size-fits-all formula. Most riders will work backwards from their ultimate goal, planning smaller targets along the way to put their homework into

Skill
Fitness

Picture by Getty Images

Fit for purpose

RIDERS are athletes too, and you'd be pushed to find a top rider who doesn't work on their own physical condition. Oliver Towned admits it's a struggle to fit in fitness work at times, but he prioritises Pilates and mobility exercises to stay strong, yet limber.

Chris Bartle places great importance on British team riders' personal preparation for a championship, with systems to help them reach optimum fitness, strength, weight and mental strength at precisely the right moment. And any rider with a goal will benefit from the consistency of a training programme, ideally one tailored to you.

"It's so important to have structure to your training," says Katie Bleekman, an eventer and fitness coach who runs Event Rider Fitness. "Structure gives you direction, leading to your goal and allowing you to see progression."

An exact programme depends on the individual rider, their goals and available time, but Katie says that an effective plan usually consists of a priming phase so the body adjusts to new movement patterns, then an initial, more intense, push phase. This might be followed by a short recovery period, before a second push phase to reach your peak.

"It's important to factor in rest and recovery for yourself, as you would for a horse," Katie says. "It helps control fatigue and reduce injury risk, and allows you to push yourself harder afterwards."

practice and assess progress. Some combinations aim to be competitive at these stepping-stone shows; others view them more as training opportunities.

Oliver is known for consistent results throughout the season, but this isn't through chance. For Oliver, every competition serves a purpose for the horse.

"Each horse needs the time to find its own feet at each level – the aim is always to have the horse feel confident," says Oliver.

"A well-prepared horse normally has the means to go to an event and comfortably perform, and that preparation happens at home but also at the previous events. Even though I compete with a large number of horses I make an effort to gel a partnership with each horse quickly so that when I ask for more, especially at the big shows, the horse has enough trust in me to know it is able to do it."

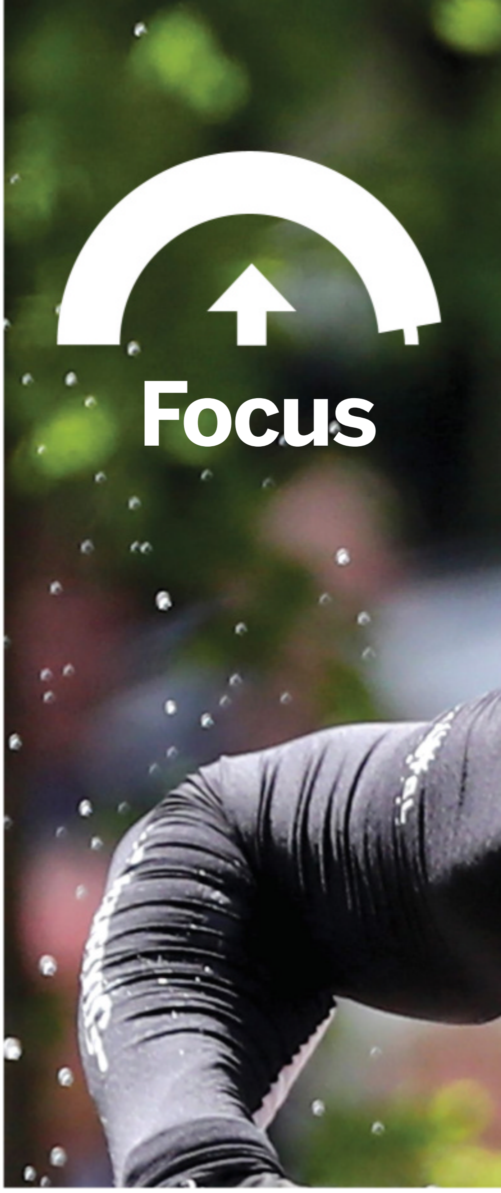
Being competitive is part of the process.

"The habit of winning is a good habit to have," points out Chris. "If you consistently ride with the handbrake on, you're not going to be tuned in and ready to go all guns blazing on the day it matters, as it's not a habit."

IN other ways, however, sometimes less is more. Pure dressage requires not only fitness, but also the perfect balance of precision and power. And for some horses, reaching a peak in one aspect comes at the detriment of another.

"Some horses actually don't need to be at peak fitness because it sends them over the edge," says six-time Olympian Carl Hester. "It's important to know your own strengths and weaknesses, so as you near your goal you are working on the things you need to be better at, not everything."

In a spectacular piece of timing, Peter Charles and Vindicat W produce the perfect round at the perfect moment, securing team gold for Britain at London 2012



In showing, there are added challenges.

"All riders have to consider fitness but we also have to have the coat and condition just right," says top showing producer Vicky Smith. "And the art of showing is that we have to have horses at their peak for anybody to ride – the ride judge. It's about timing it so they are quiet enough but still have the sparkle."

Most riders will hope to reach a peak in performance more than once in a year. Vicky highlights Royal Windsor, Royal International Horse Show and Horse of the Year Show as her main targets. How do the pros maintain this peak level? The answer is in backing off in between high points, and knowing how much to let a horse down before bringing it back up. These periods of relative downtime require as much planning as the build-up to a peak.

Chris explains: "As a coach, my role at the start of the year is to have conversations with riders and owners to make a season plan, including bringing the combination to peak performance, and allowing the horses recuperation periods. There's an important balance to strike."

Sometimes riders have to adapt their programmes, or deal with the unexpected, such as when the postponed Tokyo Olympics and European Dressage

Eyes on the prize for Oliver Townend, Olympic eventing gold medallist. "The habit of winning is a good habit to have," says British eventing performance coach Chris Bartle

Championships ran within seven weeks of each other in 2021. It's astonishing that the same combinations who brought dressage bronze home from Tokyo could return to championship level so soon after, this time collecting silver. But Carl – who rode En Vogue to individual top-10 places at both – says that they couldn't make any firm plans beyond the conclusion of the Olympics.

"We couldn't prepare for the Europeans as we didn't know how the horses would come back from Tokyo," he explains. "Even though the result might have been better at the Europeans, our real peak in performance that year was Tokyo, because we were able to focus intensely on that."

Preparation might involve changes to the usual routine, but this can be a positive.

"Because of the pre-Olympic quarantine, we were put in a situation where we could shut out all distractions and just focus on ourselves and the horses," says Carl. "It was a very intense time, but it definitely paid off."

And even the best-laid plans don't always unfold as you think. Top Irish showjumper Shane Breen emphasises how important it is to build in flexibility.

"You'll have made a plan months back, but you need to monitor how that plan is going," he says. "A few weeks prior, you might need to make tweaks. If you feel the horse is nearing his peak too early, drop back a bit, or if he may not get there in time, step it up. Make the plan in enough time to adjust for the individual."

THE world's best perfect their timing over and over again, because they have developed a system, and a support team, that enables them to achieve precision in preparation. It's not just about looking ahead of the start of a season, and working out how to make potential complications, like quarantining, work in their favour. It's also about using past experience and the power of hindsight to inform your forward planning.

Chris makes the point that it's not possible to know if you have reached your peak until after the fact.

"Sport is not a static situation. We can observe performance and then make judgments based on the outcome," he says. "It's not easy to be certain; one has to start with a plan and system, and then review it."

And whatever level you ride at or aspire to, this piece of invaluable advice from Carl always applies: "Every horse and rider is different. Don't focus on achieving the best performance, but on achieving your best performance." **H&H**

Pictures by Getty Images and Alamy

A winning warm-up

AFTER all the weeks and months of work, how do top riders ensure that they get the timing right on the big day? For Lottie Fry (pictured, below), her warm-up with a horse like Glamourdale, who knows his job, is centred around the preparation for each of the grand prix movements she is about to perform.

"We touch on everything once to make sure it's all there, but we don't want it to be the best in the warm-up, we want it to be the best in the ring, so it's more important for us to get the preparation for every movement right in the warm-up," she explains.

Showjumping has a particularly narrow window for peak performance, and Scott Brash has honed his warm-up to a specific routine so he enters the ring on the button.

"I get on when there are 16 riders before me," he says. "When there are 10 to go, hopefully I'm nicely warmed up, all my buttons are working and the horse is listening to me. So I'll give him a breather for two horses, then start jumping with eight to go."

Scott starts over a small vertical, and jumps it four or five times at increasing heights on both reins. With six riders to go, he'll do the same over an oxer, widening it each time before raising it.

Two or three before his turn, he'll jump one last vertical, aiming for a confident jump to take into the ring.

All in the detail

From training Oaks winners to Badminton pretenders, top horsemen often follow precise rituals and routines en route to glory. *Kate Johnson* finds out the secrets of their success

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TUESDAY, the home-bred filly trained by Aidan O'Brien, celebrated her third birthday in enviable style at Epsom racecourse's Derby Festival last season. No actual birthday cake (that we saw anyway), but plenty of special attention. She was saddled on the grass in the middle of the parade ring – no stalls on the sidelines for this star – by Aidan himself. The trainer, in a super-league of one, is known for his attention to detail and also brushed her mane, tail and quarters with great care.

Amid the pomp of top hats, high heels and the almost tangible mounting excitement, it was a moment of calm, designed with the horse's best interests at heart. She went on, with Ryan Moore, to take the Grade One Oaks by a short head from the favourite, Emily Upjohn, who slipped leaving the stalls.

That attentiveness is just one of Aidan's tried-and-tested methods, and the results speak for themselves. It's not confined to the upper echelons of Flat racing, though.

International showjumper Emily Moffitt may be taking a time-out from the sport for now, but she had developed a tried-and-tested modus operandi for show days. By deliberately differentiating between practice rounds and the real thing, she could target the moments when she needed the horse to give its all.

"On a practice round, I wouldn't carry a whip, I'd stay relaxed, and let the horse do whatever they want," she says. "While in a grand prix, I'd motivate them, I'd carry a whip and talk to them. I'd say, 'Come on, it's time to go.'"

She wouldn't plait unless it's a big class, to let them "know when I'm ready, and they're ready to go. I think that if you ask them to be like that every day, they lose that spark when you really need it."

Emily says she also needs firing up, and has worked on concentrating her own psychological readiness.

"I like listening to podcasts or

Illustration by David Stoten

motivational speeches – like one with an American football team in the locker room where the coach is revving them up for a big game – before I'd get on," she says. "I'd have my headphones on, take them off and get straight up on the horse."

The isolation is important.

"For a really serious competition, I'd like to be alone, not around anybody," she says. "I'd sit with my horse, headphones on. Everyone around me would know that it's my time for quiet prep and not to talk to me during that time."

This is not to get into a zen-like state of calm, not by a long chalk. Cool and collected doesn't work for everyone, but working out what brings out the best is a key piece of the performance jigsaw.

> *"I don't ride well when I'm relaxed. I have to pump myself up and get in the zone"*
> EMILY MOFFITT

Emily adds: "Anyone who knows me knows if I'm calm, it's not a good sign; I don't ride well when I'm relaxed. I have to pump myself up and get in the zone."

She's aware that plenty of competitors are the "exact opposite", but she's worked out what makes her tick.

"It became the joke of the barn; when I was training in warm-up, I'd be, 'Oh, whatever.' Mum would say to my trainer, 'Do something to get her riled up, she's way too relaxed.' He'd fire me up and do or say something to get me from warm-up to go-time!"

Emily learnt this about herself by things going wrong.

"If there was something I'd failed at – all the times I've not succeeded, when I've faced a hardship and not done as well as I could have – I would always perform better the next time because I was angry or disappointed, or something gave me the fuel to make sure the next time went better," she explains.

GRAND prix dressage rider Hayley Watson-Greaves finds a routine is key, starting with "building a relationship with horses on the ground".

Her routine at competitions is precise, consistent and deliberate. Like Aidan O'Brien, Hayley likes to get her horse ready herself.

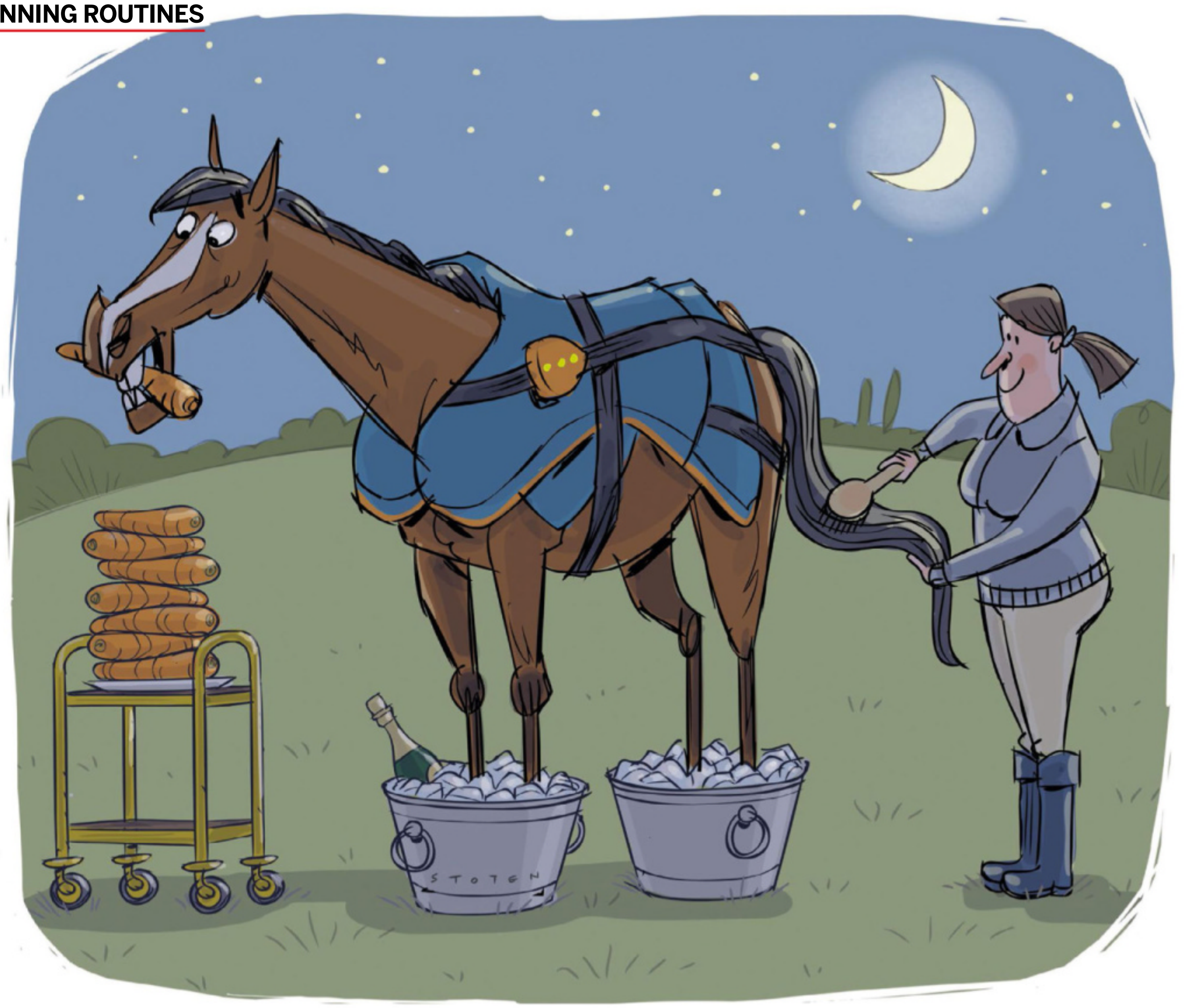
"I plait the horse and my groom stays away," Hayley says. "The horses get excited when she's around as they know they're about to compete."

If Hayley's doing a routine to music, she'll put that on for them, too, and always leaves herself 30 minutes to go back to the lorry, get changed and run through the test in her head. When she returns, Sam – her groom – has partly tacked up the horses, but Hayley puts on their bridles and gives them each a sugar lump.

She has a plan, working back from the test time, factoring in how long it will take to get to the arena from the stables, with leeway. Then 10 minutes before showtime, she'll take off their boots and brush their tail "to make sure they look glamorous". All of this is "to create a relaxed atmosphere and good routine for the horses, especially if they're stressy or excited".

The importance of a routine, and of having relaxed horses, is just one formula she learnt from the maestro Carl Hester. Hayley won a lesson with him as a pony rider, but couldn't take it up for various logistical reasons. When she graduated to horses, her father called Carl and asked if he was willing to still give her a lesson ("not the one she won") and he said yes. After that one lesson, she recalls with some incredulity, he said, "Shall I book you for another?" and she was off.

What she learnt wasn't just about riding, but how to be a horseman.



"When I was struggling with my first horse's flying changes, Carl offered for me to come and ride with him, saying, 'While I train my other horse, I'll give you pointers,'" Hayley remembers, still struck by the gesture.

She also turns out her horses daily, just as Carl does, adding, "Some of Carl's horses live out, I love that he does that. I don't turn mine out overnight as they don't want to stay out that long, but they all go out every day."

GIVING horses first-class care at home comes as standard for Olympian Kitty King, the first eventer to have represented Britain at pony, junior, young rider and senior levels. She prides herself on running her yard as a five-star hotel.

"The horses all have as much time out as possible," she says, including overnight, if it suits them. They're all rugged in a magnetic blanket after and sometimes before work, too; legs are always iced after cross-country schooling.

Again, part of her process, as with Aidan O'Brien, is to be hands-on. It's Kitty who handles the horses' legs every day, while grooms have plenty of time for proper brushing, physio, carrot stretches and daily observation of the horses.

Kitty deliberately limits the number of horses she has, currently 10, as she says: "Owners are paying for you, not a working pupil, to be riding their horses."

She schools all her horses herself, building a relationship with each individual, all in a bid to give every owner the best possible chance for their horses to get the correct education and training to develop for the future.

It's a lot of hard graft, but does this ultra-first-hand practice work?

"I hope so!" she replies with a laugh. "I've never done it any other way."

Kitty produces her horses from youngsters through to championship level. The result? She knows each horse "inside out, their strengths and weaknesses, which can only help at a big three-day event".

She explains: "I knew Badminton wouldn't be particularly easy on Vendredi Biats, because he prefers going right rein than left and last year it was going left rein. It was always going to be harder but he had to deal with it, there's nothing you can do."

> *"Owners are paying for you, not a working pupil, to be riding their horses"*
>
> KITTY KING

The pair finished seventh overall, with a personal-best dressage score – for which they warmed up in a similar way to their home routine, ensuring they know what is expected, and calmness prevails.

FOR others, though, serenity is not part of the winning procedure. Para showjumper Evie Toombes has worked out that a wake-up call can be more effective.

"With my horse Daisy, I almost have to place her on a bad stride and let her tap a pole when we're practising before a show," Evie says. "She's always been really brave and can be very careful, but easily gets ahead of herself sometimes. Chestnut mare issues!

"I call it the blind stride game, where I'll jump a single fence, but she has to sort her own legs out. It's never a big fence and is always only one, but it works really well for reminding her that fences aren't indestructible and encourages her to think for herself, which we need in a jump-off."

Details are never just details. It's about finding those personal tricks to channel horse and rider into performing at their peak. **H&H**

Illustration by David Stoten

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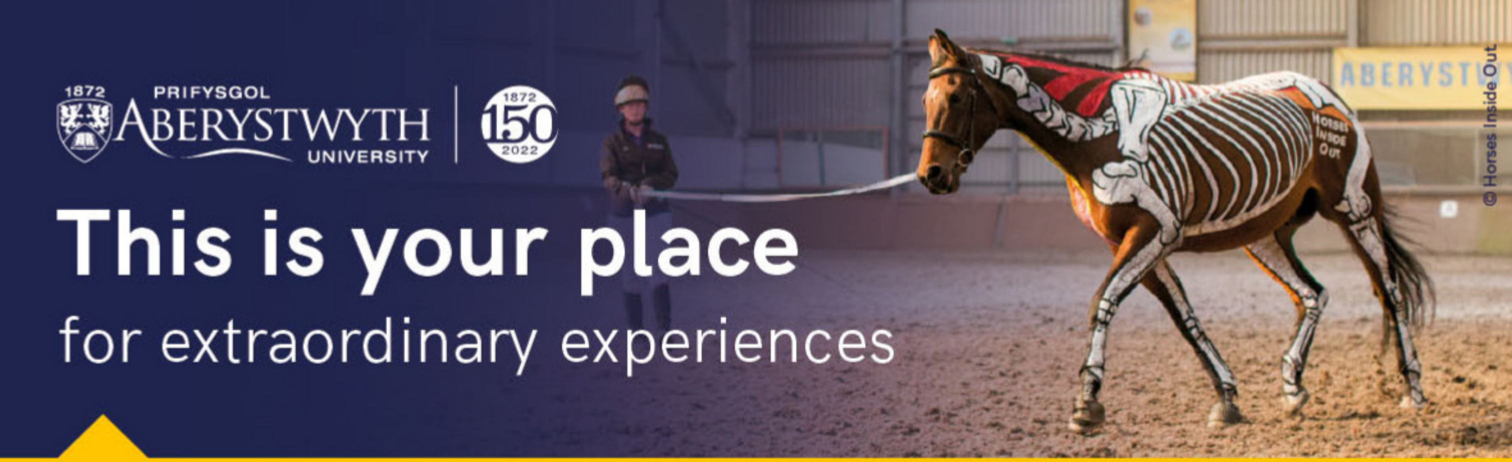

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‘They think we’re

Bling, tweed, fluorescent tack… each discipline has its own stereotypes. *Eleanor Jones* asks a few riders about their perceptions on the habits of their sister sports

AS the days start to lengthen and the daffodils bud on shady banks, one thing is for certain. Turn up to any British Showjumping (BS) event and spy, among the blonde ponytails and blingy browbands – there it is! A flash of tweed and a turquoise hat tag. It’s nearly eventing season again.

Riders of all disciplines are united by the love of the horse and everything that comes with it. But those things that do come with it can vary.

Eventer Karla Parsons, aka Muddy Mayhem on social media, hosts a podcast with a showjumping friend, and differences between disciplines are a common topic.

“One thing I always rib her about is, ‘You do know horses can trot, don’t you?’” Karla jokes. “You go in a showjumping warm-up and they walk, canter and jump. Do horses not trot any more; did I miss the memo that a pace has been removed?”

Karla admits she enjoys going showjumping – “it’s fun and they’re a good crowd; I don’t think they take themselves as seriously as a lot of eventers do” – but has spotted recurring themes.

“The blonde ponytails, the bum-freezer jackets, the beautiful patent boots that probably cost more than a mortgage payment,” she says. “Then the eventers rock up in their tweed and brown boots, and there’s always one who tries to change the rein in the warm-up. I always ask if someone in the morning picks the rein, and everyone sticks to it the whole day.”

Compared to eventing warm-ups, Karla says, showjumping can be slightly less civilised.

“You’re warming up for a [90cm] British novice and the fence was 90cm when you were coming round but then

mad’

you see it’s 1.20m and you’re committed,” she says. “I’ve probably jumped my highest fence in a showjumping warm-up. I think showjumpers love warming up; I go in and survive three fences but they’re in for ages: ‘Put it up two’. I think ‘Put it down’! But then you only get two minutes in the ring, so maybe they want their money’s worth.”

When it comes to the other way round, Karla says, “I think when showjumpers see an eventer, it’s ‘Oh bless’. You always see them when the season’s about to start; from February, they’re out in force at every BS, in their tweed, trying to change the rein. I think they think we’re mad. They have lovely civilised shows, with bars, and we get up at 4.30am and drive hours to stand in a muddy field. And we can have two down and be chuffed to bits – to an eventer, four faults is clear.”

And, Karla adds, the eventer’s fear of showjumping is real.

“I say to my husband I’m worried about it and he says, ‘Why? The fences fall down’.” she says. “But I don’t think it’s so much the fear of death, it’s the fear of people seeing when you fall off. If you come off showjumping, everyone sees, and anyone who doesn’t, the judge will kindly ring a bell to tell them. If you fall off three fields away, no one needs to know.”

LEADING dressage rider Anna Ross, who has worked with many eventers, jokes that they fall into two categories when it comes to the first phase: those who are “obsessed with the minutiae” and those who “just want it gone”.

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“One of the most difficult explanations I ever had to make was what an extended walk looks like, to a high-level eventer,” she says. “Nothing I tried was working, so finally I said, ‘What your horse does when you’re riding him and you’re on the phone’. Then he got it.”

Anna adds that eventers and showjumpers always like a bit change – “go in an eventer’s tack room and they’ll have loads” – but one eye-opener for her was the eventers’ attitude to their get-up.

“I was absolutely horrified when one of my eventers announced she was going to do dressage in her tweed; mortified,” she says. “I brought her an array of my jackets and pleaded with her to wear one but I don’t think she did in the end; she’s a bit rebellious.

“And they’re averse, I’ve found, to any bling,” she adds. “I did get one into a browband with a bit of bling but had to take it off as she couldn’t handle it. She’s ridden on British teams and I thought she might be able to cope, but that was clearly a bridge too far.”

> *“They have lovely civilised shows, with bars; we get up at 4.30am and drive hours to stand in a muddy field”*
>
> EVENTER KARLA PARSONS

One can occasionally persuade an eventer into a bit of patent, Anna has observed, but they retain a fondness for beige breeches, leading her once to take a pair of her own to an Olympics to lend to the cause.

“My kit has done a lot of international events,” she says. “It’s even been round Badminton, the closest I’ll get to that!”

Anna says she believes riders of other disciplines “think dressage riders just prance around the arena of a morning, sipping champagne between rides”.

“I’ve impressed some eventers as my horses hack and go to the pub and on Dartmoor and they think that’s a bit out-there for a dressage rider,” she says. “I think they imagine we prance around in matching kit, do a few laps, drink champagne and go home. That’s actually probably not that far wrong.”

ANNIE JOPPE, who represented Britain at the 2014 World Equestrian Games, having evented to intermediate level, says many of her fellow endurance riders dabble in dressage.

“It’s all about bright white jodhpurs, polished bits and immaculate jackets, but endurance riders secretly have a yearning to compete between the boards,” she says. “If there was brightly coloured tack allowed, that’s how you’d spot us – and we’d all be on Arabs.

“It only takes four to five minutes so we don’t really think that’s value for money.” she adds. “But at least you don’t have to carry a water bottle in your test.”

Were the tables turned, she thinks the 12-hour, compared to seven-minute, time in the saddle could lead the dressage rider to “stop and go home after 10 minutes”.

On other horse sports, she adds, vaulting is “completely baffling” – “standing on a horse and going round in circles, not going anywhere? I just don’t get it” – and showjumping is “something I often see as a bit of an alien concept”.

“It’s like Eddie the Eagle!” she says. “Why would you go over those huge fences when you could go round them?”

Showjumper Jay Halim has also competed in dressage and eventing, and believes that “dressage and showing riders are a slightly different breed”.

“If it was at Crufts, in dog terms, they’d come under the rare-breed categories,” he jokes. “And one thing I do find funny is that they seem to worry more about what the horse looks like in the prize-giving than in the test; with the horse bandaged up to the knees!”

Eventers, who “just get on with it”, are the toughest lot, Jay reckons – as do the showjumpers, who also love a party.

“But the showing people seem to go a bit wild too,” he adds. “Showjumpers have the reputation of being up all night but I think showing people like a drink or two.

“But we’re all very lucky; whatever discipline, we all love our horses and that’s what unites us. It’s the most amazing thing about what we do.” **H&H**

Piggy March and Vanir Kamira at Badminton

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Premier events

From championship qualifiers to the most challenging five-star event in the world, Britain boasts an exciting array of events. Here's the lowdown of the shows you can't miss this season, whether you're a rider or spectator

Cheltenham Festival

Cheltenham Racecourse, Glos
14–17 March

A FOUR-DAY sporting spectacular, the festival is the most prestigious race meeting in the British National Hunt calendar. Hear the famous roar as the flags go up for the curtain-opening Supreme Novices' Hurdle and marvel as the best-staying chasers battle it out for the Gold Cup.

Randox Grand National Festival

Aintree Racecourse, Liverpool
13–15 April

RUN over the iconic Aintree fences, the Grand National is the race the world stops to watch, under starter's orders at 5.15pm on Saturday, 15 April. Three days of top-class racing, featuring nine Grade Ones, culminate in the most famous steeplechase of all, watched by 500 million people in more than 140 countries.

Badminton Horse Trials

Badminton, Glos 5–8 May

THE Mecca for event riders, this year taking place on Coronation weekend. We can expect to see a bumper throng of Brits bidding for team slots over Eric Winter's track. Will Laura Collett defend her crown? The Voltaire Design Grassroots Championships at BE90 and BE100 take place prior to the main event (3–4 May).

The I.C.E. Horseboxes All England Dressage Festival

Hickstead, W Sussex
9–14 May

SOME of the world's best dressage and para dressage combinations will be in action at this new international show, which will run alongside the British Dressage Premier League fixture from advanced medium to grand prix.

Royal Windsor Horse Show

Windsor Home Park, Berks
11–14 May

THE UK's largest outdoor horse show with international competitions in four disciplines: dressage, showjumping, carriage driving and endurance. There are also over 130 showing classes, set against the backdrop of Windsor Castle.

The Derby at Epsom Downs

Epsom Downs Racecourse, Surrey
2–3 June

A COLOURFUL two-day carnival of quality Flat racing on the magnificent Epsom Downs. The festival features two of the five British Classics, the Oaks and Derby, Britain's richest and most prestigious race. The Classic runners have to show both balance and athleticism to negotiate this roller-coaster track, which climbs to the height of Nelson's Column over the 1m 4f course.

Bramham Horse Trials

Huddersfield, W Yorks
8–11 June

ONE of Yorkshire's biggest events, Bramham hosts international fields in its CCI4*-L, under-25 CCI4*-L and CCI4*-S. The track will be designed by Ian Stark. The NAF Five Star BE80 championship takes place as the main event gets underway, from 6–8 June.

Royal Ascot

Ascot Racecourse, Berks
20–24 June

BRITAIN'S most valuable race meeting, Royal Ascot attracts racing's finest horses to battle

A full crowd cheers on runners at Royal Ascot

Pictures by Getty and Alamy

it out against a backdrop of sartorial elegance and exquisite millinery creations. Each of the five days of action kicks off with the arrival of the Royal Procession at 2pm, led by the four Windsor Greys.

Al Shira'aa Hickstead Derby Meeting

Hickstead, W Sussex

22–25 June

AROUND 45,000 spectators are expected to flock to the famous showground for this iconic event. The highlight is the Al Shira'aa Derby, which first ran in 1961, with its fearsomely tricky course, incorporating the Derby Bank, Devil's Dyke, water jump and ditches. Besides eight rings of competitive action, there is a family zone with a funfair and more than 100 tradestands.

NAF Five Star Hartpury Festival of Dressage

Hartpury, Glos

4–9 July

A SIX-DAY dressage extravaganza starring Olympic, Paralympic, World and European Championship riders in over 40 classes, both international and Premier League. Look out for top British riders vying for team slots at the forthcoming European Championships. The gala evening features a freestyle grand prix and young horse prix st georges championship.

The Festival of Hunting

East of England Showground, Cambs

19 July

THE 135th running of a prestigious event full of history and tradition, showcasing the world of hunting in all its glory. Spectacles include a range of showing classes and the inter-hunt relay, in which teams of riders duel over a mirror-image set of jumps.

Longines Royal International Horse Show

Hickstead, W Sussex

25–30 July

FIVE-STAR showjumping featuring the Longines FEI Nations Cup of Great Britain and King George V Gold Cup. It's also the pinnacle of the outdoor showing season with championships galore, culminating in the British Horse Society supreme horse and Supreme Products supreme pony. And don't miss the eventers' challenge and double harness scurry.

Magic Millions Festival of British Eventing

Gatcombe, Glos

4–6 August

HELD at the home of the Princess Royal, this festival includes the British open, intermediate and novice championships, and the amateurs' Corinthian Cup and Retraining of Racehorses championship. Get set for a weekend of family entertainment.

Land Rover Blair Castle Horse Trials and Country Fair

Pitlochry, Perthshire

24–27 August

SCOTLAND'S premier equestrian event features international classes from four-star (long and short) down to the BE90 and BE100 Scottish grassroots championships. The country fair showcases all sorts of countryside pursuits in this historic Highland estate, as well as showing, showjumping and mounted games.

Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials

Burghley, Lincs

31 August–3 September

THIS is the autumn target for many of the world's top event horses. Expect course-designer Derek di Grazia's track to be big, bold and fast, the ultimate test for seasoned competitors.

Blenheim Palace Horse Trials

Woodstock, Oxon

14–17 September

THIS event at Winston Churchill's birthplace holds long and short four-stars, with the eight- and nine-year-old class showcasing young eventers. Also featuring a Retraining of Racehorses dressage championship.

LeMieux National Dressage Championships

Somerford Park, Cheshire

16–19 September

ALL levels from prelim to grand prix battle it out for the national titles, including the British national championship. Will Gareth Hughes defend his title this year?

LeMieux National Dressage Championships

Horse of the Year Show

NEC, Birmingham

4–8 October

A SHOWCASE of finals to many national showjumping championships, plus the finale to the British showing year. Also including top-class dressage with the Future Elite Championship, Pony Club mounted games and thrilling displays.

London International Horse Show

ExCeL, London

14–18 December

THE only UK show to host FEI World Cup qualifiers in all three of dressage, showjumping and driving. It also features an array of showing championships. A standing dish in many equestrians' calendars as the best way to get into the festive spirit, with top-class international action combined with incredible displays from around the world, the Shetland pony Grand National, dog agility and the traditional Christmas finale.

Fancy a trip abroad?

DRESSAGE

- **The Dutch Masters** (9–12 March), 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands, for dressage, jumping and FEI World Cup dressage freestyle

EVENTING

- **Kentucky CCI5***, US (27–30 April)
- **Luhmühlen CCI5***, Germany (15–18 June)
- **Le Lion World Young Event Horse Championships**, France (19–22 October)

SHOWJUMPING

- **Hamburg Derby**, Germany (17–21 May)
- **Paris LGCT**, France (23–25 June)
- **CHI Geneva**, Switzerland (6–10 December)

ALL DISCIPLINES

- **European Championships in Haras du Pin**, France (eventing, 9–13 August); **Milan**, Italy (showjumping, 29 August–3 September) and **Riesenbeck**, Germany (dressage, 4–10 September)
- **World Equestrian Festival**, CHIO Aachen, Germany (23 June–2 July)
- **Sweden International Horse Show**, Stockholm (30 November–3 December)

RACING

- **Dubai World Cup**, Meydan (25 March)
- **L'Arc de Triomphe**, Longchamp, France (30 September–1 October)

Below: jumping at Sweden International Horse Show

The Flat racing season hits top gear with the Guineas Festival at Newmarket in early May

ESSENTIAL GUIDE
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The joys of spring

And we're off! After a winter spent honing skills, riders are ramping up their preparations for a jam-packed season. Don't miss these events from March to May

BRC TopSpec Arena Eventing Championships

Aston-le-Walls, Northants
10–12 March

A CHAMPIONSHIP for British Riding Clubs members consisting of showjumping followed by cross-country with a joker fence 10cm higher than the rest of the track. Qualifiers have been held since autumn.

★ **BEST FOR STAR SPOTTING**

Addington CDI and CPEDI

Addington Equestrian, Bucks
13–19 March

A NEW international dressage show at this revamped premier equestrian venue. As Britain's first dressage international of the year, expect to see a host of the best grand prix and para dressage combinations in action, as they kick-start their 2023 campaigns, with an eye on championship team selection.

British Showjumping Spring Championships

Arena UK, Lincs
16–19 March

A SUPERB early championship featuring those combinations who have qualified throughout the previous months.

★ **BEST FOR FAMILY FUN**

Eventing Spring Carnival

Thoresby Park, Notts
30 March–2 April

A PACKED event with feature classes at three- and four-star. Top riders will battle for the Grantham Cup, billed as a prep run for Badminton. Plus, there's mini railway, fairground rides, archery and axe throwing, classic cars and dog agility. Also, a new Allstar B Enclosure based on the F1 Paddock Club

BRC SEIB Novice Winter Championships

Arena UK, Lincs
1–2 April

RIDING club dressage and showjumping for teams and individuals at junior and senior level. Classes range from intro to novice dressage, and 70–80cm showjumping.

National Team Chase Championships

Tur Langton, Leics
2 April

HELD at the Fernie team chase, qualified teams of riders show grit, determination and bravery as they go head to head over a tough course for the championship title.

Grimthorpe Gold Cup

Sheriff Hutton, Yorks
2 April

THE highlight of the Yorkshire point-to-point calendar – the Grimthorpe Gold Cup over 4m 1f is the feature race on this family-friendly raceday.

Blue Chip Winter ShowJumping Championship Finals

Hartpury College, Glos
12–16 April

THE indoor championship arena and outdoor all-weather arena at Hartpury play host to five days of championship and non-championship showjumping, with classes from 85cm pony classes to a 1.40m grand prix.

★ **BEST FOR STAR SPOTTING**

Barefoot Retreats Burnham Market (1) Horse Trials

Burnham Market, Norfolk
14–16 April

A POPULAR early-season event for the elite riders up on the north Norfolk coast over Alec Lochore's tracks, with three- and four-star classes as well as national classes from BE100 to advanced.

British Dressage Combined Training Championships

Onley Grounds EC, Warks
15–16 April

TWO disciplines, one championship. The combined training series allows riders to improve and showcase their dressage and showjumping skills in one competition. There are opportunities to compete from prelim through to elementary level, jumping from 70–100cm. The final qualifier will take place on 25 March.

★ **BEST FOR FAMILY FUN**

Wincanton Family Fun Day

Wincanton Racecourse, Somerset **16 April**

DELIVERING exactly what it says on the tin, the Family Fun Day is a jam-packed National Hunt race meet with plenty of attractions set on a beautiful rural racecourse. Seven competitive races feature on Wincanton's jump season finale.

NAF Five Star Winter Dressage Championships

Hartpury, Glos

19–23 April

BRITAIN'S ultra-competitive winter dressage circuit closes with this bumper five-day bonanza show, featuring championships from prelim up to inter I, plus music freestyle finals. Qualifying regional championships are held in January and February.

BRC Ri-Dry Intermediate Winter Championships

Onley Equestrian, Warks

22–23 April

A CHAMPIONSHIP event for riding club members. There is dressage and showjumping for juniors and seniors, from prelim to advanced medium, and from 90–100cm. Horse & Country TV will be live-streaming some of the classes.

Fernie Four-Miler

Dingley, Leics

30 April

THE Midlands area feature race, the Fernie Four-Miler, is the highlight of an entertaining afternoon of amateur jump racing – hopefully making the most of the spring sunshine.

Cheltenham Hunter Chase Evening

Cheltenham Racecourse, Glos

5 May

AMATEUR riders and trainers compete for the ultimate dream of winning at the home of jump racing, with seven fiercely fought hunter chases over distances from two to four miles.

★ BEST FOR GLAMOUR

QIPCO Guineas Festival

Newmarket Racecourse, Suffolk 5–7 May

TAKING place on Newmarket's oldest track, the Rowley Mile, the Guineas Festival is when the Flat season hits top gear at the home of horseracing. The two main highlights are Saturday's QIPCO 2000 Guineas and Sunday's QIPCO 1000 Guineas, the first Classics of the year.

Picture by Alamy

★ BEST FOR DOGS

Floors Castle Horse Trials

Floors Castle, Roxburghshire

11–14 May

THIS magnificent Scottish venue hosts classes from BE80 to CCI3*-S, as well as a whole host of other classes including National Schools Equestrian Association showjumping. There is also a dog show with specific breed and novelty classes, plus gundog demos.

★ BEST FOR DOGS

Chatsworth Horse Trials

Chatsworth, Derbys

12–14 May

THREE days of thrilling international competition with eventing classes including CCI2*-S, CCI4*-S (incorporating the British leg of eventing's Nations Cup) and advanced, as well as Burghley young event horse classes. The event offers a range of activities for all the family, including dog agility and a fun dog show. Plus, the stately home, garden, farmyard and playground are open as usual during the event.

★ BEST FOR GLAMOUR

Prince of Wales Trophy

Royal County of Berks Polo Club, Berks

14 May (finals day)

THE highest goal polo played at RCBPC with the world's best players battling it out in a fast-paced final. One of polo's three most prestigious tournaments that make up the Triple Crown.

Devon County Show

Westpoint Showground, Devon

18–20 May

FABULOUS showjumping in the glorious main ring, scurry racing, an inter-hunt relay competition and many Horse of the Year Show qualifiers make for three days of exceptional equestrian activity. Non-stop action in six rings.

★ BEST FOR YOUR BUCKETLIST

Golden Horseshoe

Exford Showground, Somerset

19–21 May

THE UK's oldest competitive endurance ride, with classes from 24km to 160km (100 miles). The Golden Horseshoe is held in the heart of the Exmoor National Park, with its stunning scenery to enjoy, and is widely known as one of the ultimate bucket-list endurance rides.

Top riders' go-to venues

EVENTING & DRESSAGE

● Olympic eventer Alex Hua Tian: "The event I'm most obsessed with is Bradwall Manor [Cheshire, 29–30 April], which runs classes up to novice with Dutch rider Andrew Heffernan as cross-country course-designer.

"Last year I jumped round the novice and I haven't had more enjoyable novice runs for a long time. The course is modern, with flow and has plenty of educational elements to it. When you ride lots of novice courses they all roll into one, but this was a standout event where I had two particularly nice rides."

● Grand prix dressage rider Alice Oppenheimer: "I'm lucky to have so many good venues around me. When it comes to national shows, it's a toss-up between Hickstead Premier League [9–14 May] and Wellington Premier League [6–11 June]. It was fabulous to have Hickstead back in the calendar last year, and it feels more special. Wellington is my local Premier League show, and now has fantastic facilities after all the development.

"For a day-to-day venue it would be Parwood. It's so quiet and friendly that it's a great venue for the younger horses."

BRC NAF Five Star Combined Training Championships

Aston-le-Walls, Northants

20–21 May

A CHAMPIONSHIP for qualified riding club members consisting of a dressage and showjumping test (prelim/75cm or novice/85cm). There will also be a combined challenge featuring showjumping and cross-country tests from 70–100cm.

Bicton Arena Horse Trials (1)

Bicton, Devon

25–28 May

THIS international eventing fixture fits into the slot of the discontinued Houghton in the calendar, taking the long-format three-star classes, as well as a CCI4*-S. The rolling Devon parkland typically requires a fit horse.

Northumberland County Show

Bywell Hall, Stocksfield

27 May

THE parkland setting hosts over 100 showing classes and the celebration of farming, food, fun and music in the stunning setting makes for a lovely day out in the north of the country.

Suffolk Show

Trinity Park, Suffolk

31 May–1 June

ONE of the season's early county shows welcomes hot competition in Royal International Horse Show and HOYS qualifiers, driving and jumping with national championship qualifiers. The Suffolk heavy horse, an endangered breed, is also showcased in all its glory with a full schedule of classes solely for them.

★ BEST FOR FAMILY FUN

Staffordshire County Show

Stafford Showground, Staffs

31 May–1 June

A FULL main-ring programme takes place over both days, including showjumping, parades of hounds and a grand parade of livestock. There are also showing classes, motorcycling and falconry displays, the Quack Pack (sheepdog and duck display), the Ferret Roadshow as well as horse shoeing contests, a climbing wall, giant tortoises and the Sheep Show. Guaranteed fun for all the family, besides top-notch competition.

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Hot competition

Summer means long sunny days and picnics in the grass. The competition season is in full swing with the pick of the county shows and more

ESNZ
Keyflow
keyflowfeeds.com
keyflowfeeds.com
NZ
14

Summer events offer the opportunity to watch big names at stunning venues, such as Barbury Castle Horse Trials

Picture by Alamy

Hunter Chase Evening

Stratford Racecourse, Warks

2 June

RUN over 3½ miles during an evening meeting, the Stratford Foxhunters' Champion Chase is, after the Cheltenham and Aintree Foxhunters, traditionally seen as the third jewel in the Hunter Chase crown. This triangular track favours fast, accurate jumpers.

★ BEST FOR DOGS

Royal Cornwall Show

Wadebridge, Cornwall

8–10 June

THE county's biggest annual event, which has run for more than 200 years. Classes covering everything from show ponies to poultry, donkeys, top livestock, a flower show and the Cornwall cider championships. There is also top-class showjumping. Dogs on leads are welcome.

★ BEST FOR DOGS

Dodson & Horrell Bolesworth International Horse Show

Bolesworth Castle, Cheshire

14–18 June

THE beautiful setting of Bolesworth Castle makes for a stunning backdrop as world-class equestrian talent performs in international showjumping, dressage and an eventing grand prix. Dog-friendly venue with agility and family dog shows.

★ BEST FOR FAMILY FUN

Royal Three Counties Show

Three Counties Showground, Worcs

16–18 June

THE main arena is the heart of this picturesque show with the backdrop of the Malvern Hills, with family entertainment mixed with livestock and equestrian competitions. Highlights include an inter-hunt relay challenge, a six-bar and a two-fence challenge, plus heavy horse competitions and double harness scurry driving.

★ BEST FOR GLAMOUR

The Cartier Queen's Cup

Guards Polo Club, Surrey

18 June (finals day)

THE Cartier Queen's Cup is the leading tournament of Guards Polo Club, featuring the sport's top players from around the world. The combination of top-class sporting action, glamour and the picturesque venue promises a spectacular experience.

Royal Highland Show

Royal Highland Centre, Edinburgh **22–25 June**

A HOST of showing classes, including Horse of the Year Show (HOYS) qualifiers and an opportunity to compete for one of the iconic blue sashes. There is also a top British Showjumping (BS) offering and a great shopping area for all the family. Last year, 194,000 people attended.

Out-Sourcing Inc. Royal Windsor Cup

Guards Polo Club, Berks

25 June (finals day)

THE oldest trophy at Guards Polo Club, first contested in 1955. Finals day features two fast-paced finals plus an elegant carriage-driving display.

British Driving Society Annual Show

Windsor Great Park, Berks

25 June

SET in the Royal Park at Windsor, the display of private driving turnouts has been a mainstay in the diary since 1965. Enthusiasts and their show animals have the opportunity to contest a range of classes, including concours d'élégance.

Keyflow Feeds Barbury Horse Trials

Barbury Castle Estate, Wilts

6–9 July

HELD at a venue known for its outstanding spectator viewing, Barbury is run across four days and hundreds of riders compete for the titles in a range of classes, including CCI3*-S and CCI4*-S, plus a retrained racehorse class.

Bicton Summer Tour

Bicton Arena, Devon

6–15 July

A NEW summer tour in 2021, this is proving a popular fixture in the calendar. With classes ranging from British novice upwards, it's the ideal long-stay show for showjumpers from grassroots up.

Top riders' go-to venues

EVENTING & SHOWING

● **Olympic event rider Kitty King:** "Oxstalls [Glos, 17–18 June] are running an affiliated event for the second time this year and I'd like to go there. I use the venue for cross-country schooling and have schooled round the flagged courses after their unaffiliated event. It's a well-designed and presented course, with undulations, so a useful event for educating young horses and giving them a great early experience."

● **Showing rider Vicky Smith:** "Lincolnshire Show [21–22 June] is a traditional, old-fashioned county show. The rings are immaculate and the committee takes the time to ensure perfect going. The stables are permanent and are next to the rings, and there is an all-weather arena for working in, which makes life easier on the horses, especially if it's wet or the ground is hard. The atmosphere in the horse box park is always relaxed and the stewards and stable manager will always do their best to help. The show has a great range of tradestands and displays; and we will always have a walk around once we've finished showing."

Great Yorkshire Show

Great Yorkshire Showground, N Yorks

11–14 July

THE Great Yorkshire is one of the country's biggest agricultural events, offering a variety of classes, including many HOYS qualifiers as well as showjumping and driving events. Viewing seats around the main ring and White Rose ring provide some of the best spectator experiences in the sport.

Cowdray Gold Cup

Cowdray Park Polo Club, Sussex

23 July (finals day)

REGARDED as one of the premier polo competitions in the world, the semi-finals and the final of the British Open Polo Championships for the Cowdray Gold Cup feature the best high-goal action Europe has to offer, held on the stunning Cowdray Estate.

Royal Welsh Show

Royal Welsh Showground, Powys

24–27 July

THE pinnacle of the Welsh agricultural calendar – a win at the Royal Welsh is something many breeders and riders strive for. As well as showing classes for Welsh-bred ponies, there are showing classes for in-hand, ridden and driven contenders as well as many displays and attractions. No dogs.

★ BEST FOR GLAMOUR

New Forest and Hampshire County Show

The Showground, Hants

25–27 July

A BEAUTIFULLY traditional county fixture with an equestrian schedule including showjumping, more than 50 HOYS qualifiers, inter-hunt relays, driving competitions and heavy horse classes.

Hambro Sport Horses Burgham Horse Trials

Burgham Park, Northumberland

26–30 July

WATCH the world's leading event riders steer their horses around stunning Northumberland countryside, with good going a major draw for competitors. Classes range from BE90 to CCI4*-S and the event welcomes both grassroots and international riders. It also offers a range of tradestands, allowing visitors to indulge in some retail therapy while mingling with competitors.

Dodson & Horrell Equine Sports UK Grassroots Championships

Arena UK, Lincs

27–30 July

THIS championships is one

of the circuit's staple amateur competitions, and it offers classes across showjumping, dressage, combined training and showing. The showing sections of the event culminate in a much-anticipated overall supreme championship.

National Pony Society Summer Championships

Three Counties Showground, Worcs

1–3 August

ONE of the showing season's main championships. The event is held against the backdrop of the stunning Malvern hills. With a wide variety of classes to contest, including HOYS qualifiers and prestigious national finals for working hunters and flat ponies. There are also fun evening performances to enjoy, including one specifically for young riders.

Qatar Goodwood Festival

Goodwood Racecourse, W Sussex

1–5 August

"GLORIOUS GOODWOOD", a five-day fixture featuring high-profile races including the £1m Qatar Sussex Stakes and the King George Qatar Stakes.

British Showjumping National Championships

Stoneleigh Park, Warks

1–6 August

THE best riders in the business compete for the title of national champion, and there are also several opportunities to book coveted HOYS tickets.

Equifest

Arena UK, Lincs

2–5 August

A GRASSROOTS festival attracting more than 10,000 riders and spectators. This year it takes place at Arena UK for the first time, with showing, unaffiliated showjumping, dressage and driving classes.

British Showjumping Pyecombe Senior Four-Day Show

Brendon Stud, Sussex

3–6 August

WITH classes ranging from British novice to Foxhunter, showjumpers can immerse themselves in four days of competition. National championship classes and derbies are included in the schedule full of qualifiers.

BRC NAF Five Star Horse Trials Championships

Swalcliffe Park, Oxon

4–6 August

THE pinnacle for riding club eventers, with classes for seniors, juniors, teams and individuals. Some sections include roads and tracks and steeplechase. Classes from 80cm to 100+ for qualified riding club members.

Top riders' go-to venues

SHOWJUMPING

● Will Fletcher, European YR team gold medallist: "The organisers at Wales and West have done a fantastic job this year; they're always improving their facilities and the fact they have two ranking classes in both their international shows [Chepstow Spring International, 29 April–1 May, and Summer International, 25–28 August], means that they are one of the only show centres in Britain making the improvements we need in terms of the levels of prize money in this country. We always do our absolute best to go and support them – it's not far away for us either!"

Agri-Lloyd
The secret's in the science
Royal Bank of Scotland
Partner of the Royal Highland Show since 1981
Gallaghers

★ **BEST FOR STAR SPOTTING**

Longines Global Champions Tour

Royal Hospital Chelsea, London

10–13 August

ELITE showjumpers congregate for a stellar competition in the capital. The huge prize pots tempt the best in the business and the event is a pivotal stage in the season, which ends in a finale at the Prague Playoffs.

NAF Five Star Hartpury Horse Trials

Hartpury College, Glos

11–14 August

A RENOWNED fixture in the eventing calendar held at this world-class facility. Classes range from CCI2*-L to CCI4*-L level, as well as Burghley young event horse qualifiers.

Dubai Duty Free Shergar Cup

Ascot Racecourse, Berks

12 August

A UNIQUE fixture in the global racing calendar that welcomes top jockeys to compete for racing's ultimate team prize. First held in 1999, the Shergar Cup is a thrilling single-day Flat meeting in an iconic setting.

> *'An old-fashioned county show with immaculate rings and great displays'*
>
> VICKY SMITH ON THE LINCOLNSHIRE SHOW

★ **BEST FOR DOGS**

Al Shira'aa Bolesworth Young Horse Championship/CSI2*

Bolesworth Castle, Cheshire

15–20 August

THE highlights of this six-day championship show are the young horse finals, the CSI2* grand prix, and the popular ride & drive speed class. It is held at a dog-friendly venue, and features "Have A Go" dog agility and a family dog show on both of the weekend days.

Top riders go-to venues

SHOWJUMPING

● **Joe Stockdale, world team bronze medallist:** "I've been going to Royal Windsor Horse Show [11–14 May, Spring] since I was a kid and I remember Dad jumping there a lot, so to compete there now is very special. Royal Windsor was actually my second ever five-star show, so to do that on home soil was really nice.

"My owners love it there, and are very well looked after. It's a show with a nice feel and you can't beat the location. I've had some success there, winning the under-25 class and had a couple of good rounds in the big classes and the grand prix. So there are a lot of good memories!"

Under-25 Dressage Championships

Sheepgate Equestrian, Lincs

21–26 August

A CHANCE to watch some of the country's best young riders in action from prelim up to advanced medium, with team finals, too.

Chepstow Summer International

David Broome EC, Wales & West, Monmouthshire

25–28 August

CLASSES from CSI1* bronze tour up to CSI2* big tour 1.40m, as well as five- and six-year-old competitions. Added bonus – a champagne reception.

Competitors and spectators soak up the sunshine at the Royal Highland Show

The SEIB Search for a Star Championships are held at Horse of the Year Show in October

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Autumn onwards

The season may be winding down for most of us, but with many end-of-term championships staged in autumn and major festive racing, there's plenty of action to carry you through the colder months

★ BEST FOR DOGS

Moreton-in-Marsh Show

Moreton-in-Marsh Showground, Glos
2 September

A LARGE agricultural show with a packed schedule of HOYS qualifiers. The showing classes culminate in two supreme championships for horses and ponies. There are showjumping classes up to 1.30m with a feature event, the six-bar, in the Grand Arena. The dog show is also a major attraction.

NAF Five Star BRC National Championships

Lincolnshire Showground, Lincs 2–3 September

A CELEBRATION of British Riding Clubs (BRC), this event hosts championships in dressage, showjumping, style jumping and riding test, as well as direct entry classes that don't require qualification.

Cornbury House and Young Horse Championships

Cornbury House, Oxon
7–10 September

The British Young Event Horse Championships have a new venue this year, the magnificent setting of Cornbury House. There are three championship categories, with the five-, six- and seven-year-olds all competing at international level, plus a four-year-old showcase. The best place to spot Britain's future stars. There are also one-day sections at BE105, novice and intermediate, plus CCI3*-S.

★ BEST FOR YOUR BUCKET LIST

Edinburgh Riding of the Marches

Edinburgh, Scotland
10 September

ROOTED in the historical Common Ridings of Scotland, 280 horses traverse the Royal Mile in a reenactment of the return of the Captain of the Trained Band to Edinburgh after defeat at the Battle of Flodden, 1513. High-octane gallops and a parade through the city in front of 20,000 spectators. Rider applications sell out in minutes.

Westmorland County Show

Lane Farm, Cumbria
13–14 September

ENJOY a fantastic day out on the fringes of the Lake District. This has been touted as a top UK show, attracting 30,000 visitors a year. Besides the equine classes in showing and showjumping, this is a major livestock show with cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and alpacas. And there's plenty to tickle your tastebuds in the north-west's largest food hall...

★ BEST FOR GLAMOUR

Cazoo St Leger Festival

Doncaster Racecourse, S Yorks 14–17 September

ONE of the highlights of the Flat racing season, with four thrilling days of action kicking off for the first time this year with ladies' day. The final day's Group One Cazoo St Leger, is the world's oldest Classic.

Sunshine Tour Championships

All England Jumping Course, Hickstead, W Sussex
14–17 September

A FUN championship series for novice, amateur and unaffiliated riders, handlers, horses and ponies. It features dressage, showjumping, showing and eventers' challenges for juniors and seniors, all at the hallowed Hickstead showground.

British Carriage Driving National Championships

Ashfields, Essex
15–17 September

THE pinnacle of outdoor carriage driving trials in this country, as competitors go head to head in the three-phase trials – think eventing on wheels, with the elegance of dressage followed by the speed and skill of the marathon and then the precision of cones.

NPS Arena Eventing Challenge Final and Performance Show

Aston-le-Walls, Northants
16 September

THIS competition was recently introduced to give working hunter contenders the opportunity to see if their ponies could shine in the eventing world and to promote performance. Qualifiers are held throughout the season with the final being held at Aston-le-Walls at the end of the term.

★ NEW EVENT

Chard Horse Trials

Chard Equestrian, Somerset
23–24 September

THE only new fixture in this

Picture by Peter Nixon

year's British Eventing calendar. The event features classes from BE80 to BE100, including under-18 sections.

Childeric Saddles Little Downham (3) Horse Trials

Ely, Cambs 26 September

THE third of Little Downham's four horse trials of the season, this features a CCI4*-S, and a notoriously tough cross-country time – good prep for horses gearing up for the Continental three-days in October.

Osberton Horse Trials

Worksop, Notts

27 September–1 October

International eventing classes from CCI* to CCI3*-L, including a pony CCI2*-S.

Cotswold Cup

Cirencester Park, Glos

29 September–1 October

THE finals of an unaffiliated eventing series aimed at grassroots competitors. The championships boast a £10,000 prize-pot for the winners of the open classes, and training bursaries for juniors. Classes from 70cm to 1m. Qualifiers start 18 March.

Veteran Horse Society National Championships

Arena UK, Lincs

29 September–1 October

THE largest veteran equine event in the UK, host to the prestigious end-of-season supreme final and "veteran of the year". The show has over 120 classes – showing, dressage, jumping and fun – open to both members and non-members with no qualification necessary.

Dressage to Music and BRC Quadrille

Bury Farm, Bucks

29 September–1 October

THESE dressage-to-music championships offer a range of classes from prelim to advanced with pick-your-own tests for those competing the highest levels. The quadrille is a team display with four riders wearing themed costumes, judged on turnout, content of programme and artistic impression – it's a lot of fun. A selection trial takes place at the dressage-to-music championships. There is also an introductory championships running alongside.

SEIB Search for a Star Championships

Horse of the Year Show, NEC, Birmingham

4–6 October TBC

DUBBED the *X-Factor* on horseback, this series aims to identify horses and ponies that may not otherwise have the chance to compete at this level, enabling amateur home-producers to ride at HOYS.

Petplan Equine Summer Area Festival Championships

Arena UK, Lincs

5–8 October

THIS popular championship gives amateur dressage riders a taste of the big-time, with finals from prelim level up to inter I including freestyle. Qualifying Area Festivals are held in July and August.

Caledonian Showing Championships

Highfield at Howe, Fife

13–15 October

A CHAMPIONSHIP show featuring in-hand, ridden and working hunter classes, with the evening performances offering side-saddle and concours d'élégance. Enjoy the spectacle – top hats, glitter, flowers, music, lights and all.

Bicton Arena International (3)

Bicton, Devon 19–23 October

THE only British Eventing fixture now running three-day classes at BE90 and BE100. These classes include roads and tracks and steeplechase and are direct qualifiers for Badminton's grassroots championships.

Saracen Horse Feeds Quest National Championships

Arena UK, Lincs

3–5 November

FROM 10 qualifying competitions, a total of 32 qualified combinations will come forward in the intro, prelim and novice My Quest classes in the open and under-21 sections; and 24 Team Quest teams in the open and under-21 sections will do battle.

Top riders' go-to venues

DRESSAGE & SHOWING

● Grand prix dressage rider Becky Moody:

"I love Myerscough [7–12 March] and Somerford [26–28 June] Premier Leagues. They have brilliant teams running them and excellent facilities. Yorkshire Dressage at Aldham Mill is our local venue. It's great for the young horses as it has a nice indoor warm-up and good fences round the competition arena. Nothing is too much trouble for the team there either."

● Workers specialist Ellie Hirst:

"I never miss Royal Norfolk [28–29 June], although I get the most nervous there as it's my local county show. My favourite is Royal Cheshire [20–21 June]. It has good worker courses and big rings, and it seems to be my lucky show; in 2021, I qualified Noble Gladiator for HOYS in the working hunter class; in 2022 he won the HOYS side-saddle qualifier, and Lord Domino qualified in the workers."

National Amateur and Veteran Championships

Aintree International EC, Merseyside 14–19 November

THE chance for amateur and over-45 showjumping riders to contest a championships. Classes start at 85cm.

★ BEST FOR YOUR BUCKET LIST

Melton Hunt Club Ride

Freeby/Waltham, Leics

19 November

AN annual ride in prime hunting country. It has been held almost every year since 1956, won by some of the best and boldest riders across the country. This year's race is in Belvoir country.

STARS Champion of Champions

Aintree International EC, Merseyside 23–26 November

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Royal Welsh Winter Fair

Royal Welsh Showground, Powys

27–28 November

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22–23 December

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Ladbrokes Christmas Festival

Kempton Park Racecourse, Surrey 26–27 December

THE highlight of this two-day festival is the King George VI Chase, the mid-season target for the top staying chasers. Many have gone on to win the Gold Cup, such as Arkle, Desert Orchid, Best Mate and Kauto Star. A post-Christmas treat to blow away the hangover.

Coral Welsh Grand National

Chepstow Racecourse, Monmouthshire

27 December

A FEATURE 3m 6½f race for doughty stayers jumping 23 fences, this has been run at Chepstow since 1949, but it has been in the calendar since 1895 when it was held in Cardiff. It's not just for the sloggers, however, with the likes of Native River, Synchronised and Borough Hill Lad going on to win the Cheltenham Gold Cup. H&H

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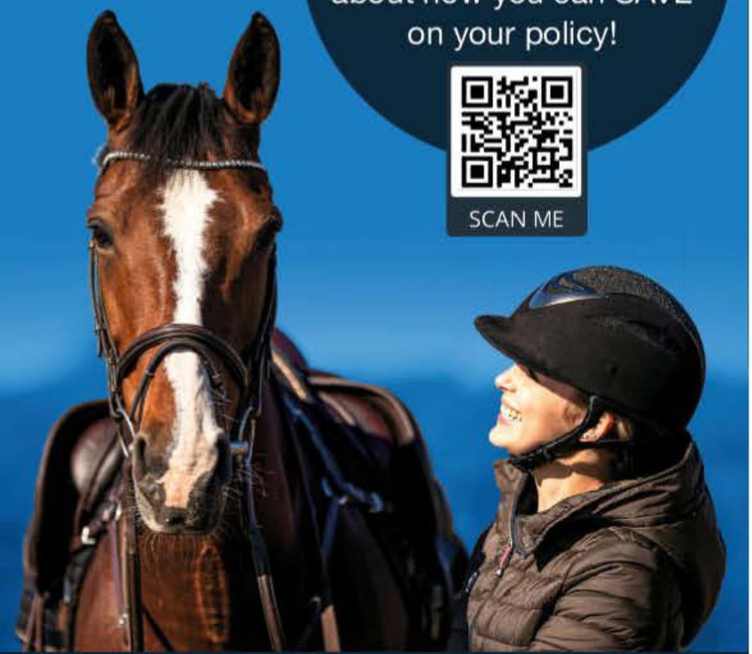

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New for 2023 Amateur Heavy Horses In Hand

Pony Club Open Winner Helena Kitchener on Cavan Mick

SEIB Racehorse to Riding Horse Champion 2022 Katie Jerram on First Receiver, owned by HM King Charles III

SEIB Search for a Star Your Horse Live Supreme Champion 2022 [illegible]

SEIB Search for a Star 2023

Ridden, In-hand and an introduction to showing for Pony Club members of all ages.

SEIB judges will be on hand to help and mentor competitors. There are also two weekenders planned for 2023, which include a day of training and preparation.

SEARCH FOR A STAR PONY CLUB YOUR HORSE LIVE CHAMPIONSHIP

After the success of last year, we will again join forces with the Pony Club to offer a Lead Rein and First Ridden Championship for children 10 and under.

In addition, there will be an open class for the older children that will judge horses and ponies as suitable for all round Pony Club activities, conformation, way of going and temperament will also be important (no jumping).

These classes are open to any child or young person who is a member of the Pony Club and any type of horse or pony that is athletic enough to be an all-rounder but correct enough to be a show horse.

SEIB SEARCH FOR A STAR WEEKENDER

Taking place in both Scotland and England, competitors will have the opportunity to come the day before the competitions and learn from the judges. They will be helped with way of going, turnout, trot-up and taught how to stand the horse or pony up for the judges.

SEIB HORSE OF THE YEAR SHOW SEARCH FOR A STAR

Amateur only ridden classes for Working Horse, Working Pony, Show Hunters, Riding Horse and Hacks, Show and Maxi Cobs, Traditional Gypsy Cobs (all colours). Qualify for Horse of the Year Show.

SEIB RACEHORSE TO RIDING HORSE

Open ridden class that qualifies for Horse of the Year Show. Amateur only class at TSR on 16th July.

SEIB YOUR HORSE LIVE RIDDEN SEARCH FOR A STAR

Amateur ridden classes for Mountain and Moorlands and Open ridden class for Veterans any horse or pony aged 16 or over. Qualify for Your Horse Live.

SEIB YOUR HORSE LIVE IN-HAND SEARCH FOR A STAR

In Hand classes for amateur handlers with horses and ponies in these sections: Veteran, Mountain and Moorland, Traditional and Native Types, Plaited Horses and hogged Show Cobs and Plaited Ponies. Qualify for Your Horse Live.

New for 2023 Amateur Heavy Horses In Hand.

Competition Dates 2023

QUALIFIERS:

23rd April 2023 Vale View Equestrian, Old Dalby, Melton Mowbray

3rd & 4th June Netherton Equestrian, Aberargie, Scotland

July TBC Ireland, Date & Location TO BE CONFIRMED
(Pony Club Only)

14th & 15th July TSR Championships, Stoneleigh, Warwickshire

16th July SEIB Racehorse to Riding Horse Amateur only
(run under TSR rules)

2nd August Equifest, Arena UK

12th August Pycombe Equestrian Centre, Brighton, Sussex

19th August Pony Club Championships, Offchurch Bury, Leamington Spa, CV33 9AR (Pony Club Only)

3rd September Land Rover Burghley Horse Trials
(Racehorse to Riding Horse only)

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Saturday May 20th

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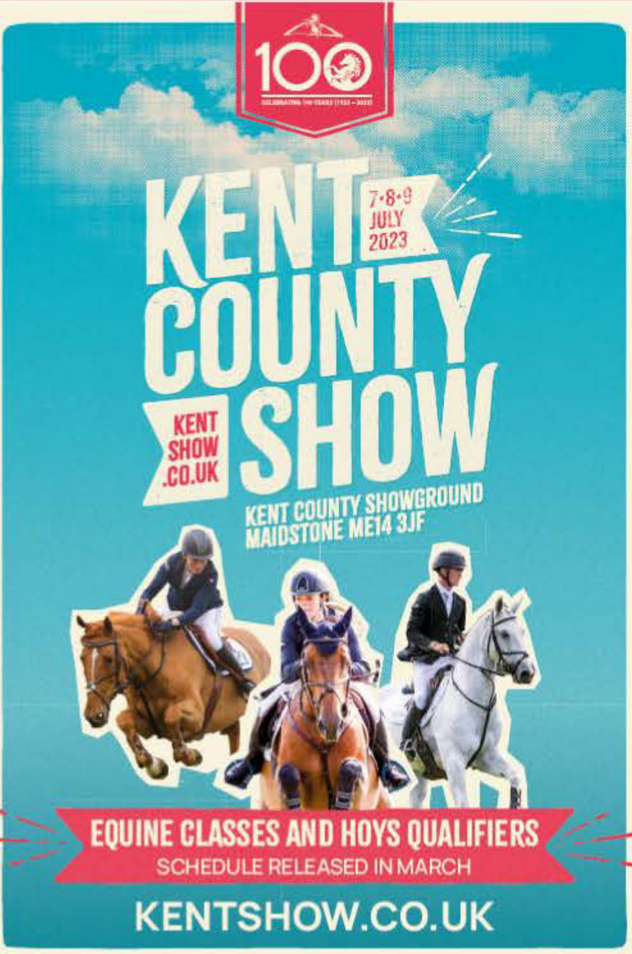
Shows - London & The South East



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The Al Shira'aa Hickstead Derby Meeting
21 - 25 June 2023 *(Entries close: 22 May)*
Senior affiliated jumping classes starting from 0.90m plus HOYS Showing qualifiers (H, C, RH, Hunters, WH, Scurry Driving), Coloureds and RoR Champs

Hurst College National Schools Jumping Championships
30 June 2023 (*Entries close: 16 June)*

The Longines Royal International Horse Show
25 - 30 July 2023
(Entries close: Showing 5 June, Jumping 12 June)
Senior affiliated classes starting from 0.90m plus RIHS Showing Championship classes for all sections (must qualify)

All England September Tour
30 August - 3 September & 6 - 10 September 2023
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Royal Welsh Showground • Llanelwedd • LD2 3SY

Ceisiadau ceffylau ar-lein ar agor
19 Ebrill - 24 Mai 2023

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19 April - 24 May 2023

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Shows - The Midlands

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21ST & 22ND JUNE

The Lincolnshire Show

Lincolnshire Showground, Grange-de-Lings, Lincoln LN2 2NA

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Advanced entries close on Thursday 27 April

Final closing date - Thursday 11 May (NB £10 extra per entry)

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11 - 14 May 2023

Dressage Secretary
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dressage@hickstead.co.uk

ROYAL CORNWALL SHOW
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Tel: 01208 812 183 Fax: 01208 812 713
Email: livestock@royalcornwall.co.uk
Web: www.royalcornwall.co.uk
Closing date for entries: 16th April 2023

The Al Shira'aa Hickstead Derby Meeting

21 - 25 June 2023

Secretary: Lizzie Bunn
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30 June 2023

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JULY 24TH - 27TH

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What A Doubt

This thoroughbred was the perfect schoolmaster and gave his amateur jockey the thrill of a first race-ride as well as many days leading the Old Berks field

THE most difficult thing about putting together this page is settling on just one horse.

"Picking a hunter of a lifetime is an impossible task," says William, Viscount Astor, chairman of the British Hound Sports Association. "I was lucky enough to be brought up at Cliveden, where we had wonderful riding and a cross-country course. I could have chosen my first proper pony Darkie, from when I first joined my father hunting with the Whaddon Chase."

After Darkie, William was sent to Captain Radcliffe at Lew to try Cherry Brandy.

"He never stopped pulling, even in a double bridle; there was no fence out there that we did not jump, voluntary or, too often, involuntary."

At the age of 12, he admits, he was sent home from Pony Club camp at Taplow "for being out of control. I rode home rather relieved to be let out of the grooming lesson."

However, in his early 20s, William met "the one that stands out: What A Doubt."

Back from New York, where he had lived for a couple of years, William moved to Oxfordshire to hunt, with the ambition to ride in a point-to-point.

"My neighbour, the great equestrian and trainer Henrietta Knight, took one look at my dubious riding ability and decided I needed a schoolmaster."

> *"He was a joy to ride, with great talent and a welcome expertise"*

The thoroughbred What A Doubt, who had competed at Badminton, was "perfect for the job". He was 12 when he arrived and hunted until he was 20.

He was a superb hunter, "a joy to ride, with great talent and a welcome expertise learnt over the years."

William went on to field master from him as joint-master of the Old Berks, with "the full confidence that anything we met we could get over. Like many good horses, he loved hunting – his ears would go forward as he had heard the hounds speak long before me."

After a season hunting with the Old Berks and schooling with jump trainer Captain Tim Foster, William set off to Tweseldown.

"The Captain gave me the command he gave every amateur: 'Keep getting back on.' I did manage to get back on and managed to come fourth."

William acknowledges the many good horses he has been "lucky enough" to have had since, including Squeeze from Timmy Hyde in Ireland "on whom I won a few team chases", and his current star Charlie, also found by Henrietta in Ireland.

"He spooks at every dustbin and sees ghosts out on exercise, but out hunting he just gets on with the job," said William.

William did eventually win the members' race of the Old Berks on Another Ark one Easter Monday, but he "still remembers every fence of my first ride at Tweseldown". The best ones really do stand out. **H&H**

Words by Octavia Pollock. Picture by Peter Ayres Photography

Edited by Catherine Austen
catherine.austen@futurenet.com
@cfausten123

'It has been the greatest privilege'

Graham Higgins is retiring from hunting after 40 years as a master. *Rory Knight Bruce* goes to Cornwall to meet him and his wife Lynsey

Pictures by hamishmitchellphotography.com

Graham's long and distinguished career began in 1983 with the Bolventor Harriers, whose green coat is still worn following the amalgamation with the East Cornwall

FOR many visitors to Cornwall, its image and experience are of sandy beaches, starfished coves and lasting memories of long summer days and sundowner evenings.

But for the "real" Cornwall, it is necessary to journey to its interior, small villages, their houses almost glued to the shoulders of steep bracken banks, and the wild expanse of Bodmin Moor. Nowhere in Cornwall is this more authentic than at the farm near St Neot of East Cornwall master and huntsman Graham Higgins and his wife Lynsey.

Hounds, which have been kennelled here for 40 years, loll on tidy benches, hunt horses graze in the paddocks and, in the front room, a host of modest memorabilia commemorate and venerate Graham Higgins's 40 years as a master of hounds, first with the Bolventor Harriers and then, since 1997 and their amalgamation, with the East Cornwall. Now 68, Graham will retire from the mastership at the end of the season, as will Lynsey, his joint-master for nine seasons, for six of which she hunted hounds.

"It has been the greatest privilege," says Graham as we talk on the farm where he was born and brought up. "I could not have done it without the long friendships and community of the farmers. They have, quite simply, been marvellous."

While Graham was brought up to farming, his was not a hunting household. For this he would walk, aged seven or eight, to the nearby home of Dennis and Betsy Moore.

He got a Shetland pony called Brigadier and with Dennis Moore, joint-master of the East Cornwall (1959–65), would also go on visits to the neighbouring packs, the South Devon and the Spooners and West Dartmoor.

"It was Betsy who taught me how to ride, but with Dennis after hunting or racing, I would, aged 12, be having supper with the masters or the stewards," Graham says.

He also gives great credit to the East Cornwall branch of the Pony Club.

Graham knows the country "like the back of my hand"

> *"I could not have done it without the long friendships and community of the farmers"*
>
> GRAHAM HIGGINS

"Of course, it was far more entwined with hunting than is the case today," he says.

With the Pony Club he went showjumping and eventing on a horse called Cherie. There were also a couple of seasons point-to-pointing, an experience he recounts with his typical humour and modesty. He had one winner in the men's open on a horse called Shallow Point at the Spooners' meeting at Kilworthy.

"She was a difficult mare and going into the last, I was 20 lengths behind. Then the three leaders fell like flies. So I was the last to start and the first to finish."

Graham's hunting career proper began whipping-in to master and huntsman Charlie Smith (1966–76) at the East

Lynsey and Graham Higgins leave Jamaica Inn with the field on one of the well-attended Boxing Day meets

Cornwall, which he did for seven seasons.

"That was a very important time for me. I got to know the country and the people like the back of my hand."

This did not mean there was not the odd occasion for frivolity. One year, having paraded at the Royal Cornwall show at Wadebridge, they decided to entertain 12 French masters of foxhounds who were visiting. The parade and French horn blowing being over, they led the Frenchmen out through the car park and went on what sounds like something of a "midnight steeplechase".

"I do not think they will have forgotten our wild Cornish banks," says Graham. "They were grateful to be returned to the collecting ring in one piece."

On another occasion, hunting with legendary East Cornwall master Bevil Bunt (1976–97), Graham found he had jumped into a graveyard.

"Take your hat off and go out through the lynch gate," the master instructed Graham.

But it was in 1983, aged 28, that Graham began as master and huntsman of the Bolventor Harriers, whose distinctive green coat is still worn by the two amalgamated hunts today. The harriers would hunt primarily the East Cornwall country, with six days a season in the North Cornwall.

"We were permitted to hunt hares until 1pm and then foxes after that. However, that did not always go according to plan," Graham concedes. "There were plenty of foxes and hares and ours was, with the East Cornwall, a distinctive and appreciated service to the moorland sheep farmers."

The two hunts amalgamated in 1997, and Graham continued in his unbroken 40-season mastership to this day.

It would be impossible to write about the East Cornwall without mentioning the Jamaica Inn. For many years this iconic inn and hotel, immortalised by Daphne du Maurier in her spine-chilling book, has been the hospitable and welcome backdrop for hunt meets, dinners and all manner of functions. Boxing Day was often a high point.

"It was not uncommon to have 20 or 30 coaches bringing holiday visitors from Torbay and Newquay to the meet to support the foxhounds and for a day out at the pub," recalls Graham.

> *"It was not uncommon to have 20 or 30 coaches of holiday visitors at the meet to support the foxhounds"*
>
> ON BOXING DAY AT JAMAICA INN

From there, for mounted followers, it was a short hack onto the supportive farm of Peter Throssell and the iconic hill of Brown Willy (1,378 feet above sea level), from which both Cornish coasts can be viewed.

Visiting packs have also been a welcome feature of Graham's long and largely harmonious mastership. All their Cornish and Devon neighbours have been welcomed. But perhaps the zenith of such visits has been the reciprocal friendship that has grown between the East Cornwall and the Duke of Beaufort's foxhounds in Gloucestershire.

"We are one of the smallest packs in the country and they, hunting four days a week, are one of the largest, but we have found much common ground in sport and friendship," reflects Graham.

It all came about several years ago when he and Lynsey were camping at Badminton for the horse trials and were invited to look at the Beaufort hounds in kennels by then joint-master and huntsman, Captain Ian Farquhar.

"Hounds well-bred can hunt in any country," Ian said to Graham, and the sporting gauntlet was thrown down. A merry band of Beaufort supporters, marshalled with fine and diplomatic skill by their long-standing hunt secretary Nigel Maidment, have now made several visits to Cornwall in the spring.

The time came for the East Cornwall to return to Badminton.

"We took 14½ couple of our modern English mixed pack and were soon well away," Graham recalls, while admitting to significant nerves in his normally unflappable character. One element was noticeably different. The Beaufort stop for second horses and this break in proceedings slightly confused the Cornish hounds, used to hunting all day

JAMAICA INN
The Bolventor Harriers' final meet at Jamaica Inn, in 1997. The famous hostelry also hosted many a social event

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Graham's wife Lynsey, who has also been his joint-master for nine of his 40 seasons, shares a gentle moment with a hound

from the meet without a break.

"It took them a bit of time to settle and get tuned in again, but these visits have been a wonderful experience for all of us. You are treated at the Beaufort like family. We have made good and lasting friendships and I like to think that they, in coming to us, have experienced genuine Cornish hospitality."

There has also been an exchange of ideas. Through coming to Badminton, Graham Higgins got to meet Alan Willis, whose firm and family construct the fences for the event course at Badminton and other horse trials. They came to Cornwall to work their course-building magic at Port Eliot, home of the ever-supportive St Germans family.

"This event at Port Eliot, wholly put on by volunteers, has been a huge revenue earner for the hunt, which is otherwise sparsely populated with unpopulated moorland," says Graham.

WHILE Graham's life has been steeped in the farming and hunting country in which he was brought up, that of his wife Lynsey could not have been more different.

She was brought up at Cannock Chase in Staffordshire and would, with her father and grandfather, pick up horse manure from a field out of town to fertilise their flower beds. One day, she just got on one of the ponies in the field, bareback, and never looked back. The family then moved to a campsite near Graham's farm and, by 16, Lynsey was whipping-in to the Bolventor

ONLY IN HORSE & HOUND

How can we thank our farmers?

Gratitude to those who let us cross their land needs to be uppermost

OPINION

THE goodwill of our farmers and landowners, whereby they allow us to carry out our sport on their land, is something that is never underestimated by masters whose job it is to seek such permission. Other than announcing our thanks in speeches at every given opportunity, how else can we show our gratitude for this enormous privilege?

All hunts are different, but common practices include a fallen stock service, an invite to the puppy show, free tickets to the point-to-point (where some have a masters' hospitality tent for that very reason) and possibly a farmers' supper.

Here at the Zetland, an annual fixture is the farmers' meet hosted by one of our many local supportive pubs. All farmers and landowners are invited by the masters to join us, either mounted or on foot, for a scrumptious full English breakfast prior to a 12 noon meet. This is followed by what will hopefully be a great day's hunting and a wonderful hunt tea laid on back in the pub upon our return.

For this day, subscribers are encouraged to loan their horse to a farmer who may want to ride but does not have their own mount. Although not the aim of the day, but an added bonus, in the past this has resulted in some farmers regaining "the bug" and subscribing the following season.

Our farmers' meet this season fell on 14 February, so when it was suggested in the masters' WhatsApp group changing the meet date to 15 February, I thought I must have joined a mastership of romantics who had the whole day pencilled out to treat their significant other. But it was for more practical reasons – so the pub diners, out for their Valentine's meal, didn't have to put up with exuberant hunting folk reliving their day.

Gareth Watchman joined the Zetland as joint-master and huntsman on 1 May, having spent three years in the same position at the Berwickshire.

"PRESSURE'S ON!"

THE ever-turning wheel of hunt finances are never far away from any real supporter's mind. New ideas and initiatives are therefore always welcome and if followed through, some really take off and can be added to the calendar.

The Sinnington adopted the idea of selling a private day's hunting for 10 people in the auction at their hunt ball, as a number of other hunts have done. One of our subscribers had the winning bid and I was lucky enough to be one of the invitees.

When the 10 gentleman gathered at the meet, a foot follower said to Sinnington huntsman Tom Cranage, "Pressure's on t'day lad, three of 'em out of those 10 are current 'untsmen!"

I reminded Tom that he had nothing to worry about as we are all sympathetic to what it takes to produce a good day's sport. Tom, being the cool-headed character he is, needed no reassurance and managed to give us all an excellent day. **H&H**

Harriers, proudly wearing the hunt's green livery.

It was Surtees who said that all foxhunters should try being a master once just to know what a relief it is to give it up. And, on a more admiring note, the legendary American master, huntsman and hound-breeder Ikey Bell said: "For anyone to be a master for three seasons is an achievement in itself." Graham has done 40 seasons, and Lynsey nine.

> *"You are treated at the Beaufort like family"*
>
> ON THE TWO HUNTS' FRIENDSHIP

What was their proudest moment, I asked them both as they sat on the sofa of the front room of their wonderful and immaculate farmhouse?

"Seeing each other hunt hounds," they chorused.

The retirement of any mastership is a time for celebration and gratitude, tempered with reflection and not a little sadness. Graham and Lynsey have gathered around them not just a remarkable team of friends and volunteers, but also Neil Starsmore, now in his third season as joint-master and huntsman who, appropriately, formerly whipped-in at the Duke of Beaufort's. But it is to the farmers and landowners that Graham Higgins's own gratitude is directed.

"Even with hounds in full cry, I would always stop and speak to them," he says. "It is to them I owe my hunting life." **H&H**

Graham with his children, Katie, Andrew and Jack

Picture by hamishmitchellphotography.com

TESTIMONIAL

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How to clean your hunting kit

Do you think that you deserve a 10 for turnout on a hunting day? If not, read on. *Catherine Austen* has garnered some top tips to help us all look smarter

IF, like me, you try to hunt as much as horse soundness and finances permit, it is possible that by this stage in the season, your kit is looking a little "tired". If this was the Pony Club camp of your youth, you would definitely not be getting a 10 for turnout.

So as we're on the downhill run to the end of the season, let's reboot our approach to cleaning our apparel with one last burst of energy.

BOOTS

WE are assuming for the purposes of this feature that you have leather hunting boots and trees to fit them. They're expensive to buy and time consuming in terms of care, but worth it a thousand-fold.

"Always use cold water to wash them off, never hot as it shrinks the leather and cracks it," says Harry Beeby, professional huntsman of the Fernie. "Don't use too much water and only a sponge or a cloth; scrubbing brushes scratch the leather. If you've somehow got them soaking wet during the day, pack them with newspaper to dry, but otherwise put the trees in immediately and let them dry."

Hunt staff are the undoubted experts in cleaning kit to the highest standards, but Harry's next words have me feeling guilty.

"Put on four layers of polish, the first one as soon as the boots are dry. I use normal Kiwi black polish for the first

Picture by sarahfarnsworth.co.uk

three layers and bone [with that smooth piece of deer bone we all apparently have to hand – hmmm] each layer on.”

Harry then uses a gloss polish for the last layer, using a soft cloth and circular movements to work it in, before buffing it off. Finally, buff them again with a pair of 40-denier tights over a pair of socks.

Right. I have never used more than two layers of polish, applied with a soft brush, and I use a duster to buff them up. Must try harder.

Polly Portwin, the Countryside Alliance’s head of hunting and a former Bicester with Whaddon Chase master, recommends using a toothbrush to get rid of the mud in the grooves between the leather boot and the sole.

“Don’t forget to remove what we used to call ‘jockeys’ – the lumps of grease that appear on the inside leg of your boots, in the same way they do under your saddle flap, and put a thinner layer of polish on the inside of the boot leg than the outside,” she says.

I just wipe and then saddle-soap the garter straps and am relieved to hear that Harry does the same.

“You could, however – if you wanted to – use boot polish on the front face of the straps if you are careful. Then run the rough side of a Brillo pad down the edges to remove any polish that might end up on your breeches,” he says.

SPURS

NOW is when I have to confess that I rarely take the straps out of my spurs until the end of the season. Shocking, I know; valeting rooms in hunt kennels round the country show off straight rows of spur straps ready to be re-threaded into spurs before each hunting day.

I just have two sets of spurs – one with brown leather straps for brown boots, one with black leather straps for black boots – and carefully clean the mud and grease off whichever I have worn, as soon as I have done my boots. I then use a good saddle-soap or tack conditioner, once straight away and once again before a hunting day.

However, the truly well-turned-out hunting person takes them to pieces, hooks the straps straight onto the board they have specially made for the purpose once clean, and works in a couple of layers of polish with one hand, while using Brasso for a lovely shine on the metal spurs. Hey-ho.

COATS

IF I could pay someone to do one thing in my life for me, it would be to clean my coat. A really muddy hunting coat almost brings me to tears; the endless brushing hurts my arm, the mud dust gets everywhere, you end up scratching the worst lumps off with your fingernails and you still have to sponge off the stains (with cold water, not hot) before it looks at all smart again.

“If you’ve fallen off in plough or something and your coat is filthy, then use a cold pressure washer to hose it down,” advises Harry.

Polly also hoses her down, always with cold water, if it is particularly dirty: “The advantage of essentially washing it is that you don’t get those shadowy stains which appear when you are just brushing it clean,” she says.

Ali Butler hunts with the Warwickshire – whose country is notoriously deep clay – alongside her son Arthur and husband Sam, who is hunt chairman and a regular field master.

> *“If you’ve fallen off in plough and your coat is filthy, use a cold pressure washer to hose it down”*
>
> HARRY BEEBY, HUNTSMAN OF THE FERNIE

She says that Sam has responsibility for boots and coats: “He hangs them up outside and uses rainwater from a butt and a brush to scrub them. Don’t dry them above direct heat unless they are absolutely drenched, dry them quite slowly. And Sam is fastidious about cleaning the brass buttons on his coat each time, using a button stick that stops the metal polish getting onto the coat.”

Those of us who aren’t masters or hunt staff don’t have brass buttons to polish, but the engraving of normal hunt buttons does benefit from a wipe after a muddy day.

BREECHES, STOCKS, HATS AND WHIPS

MOST modern hunting breeches are machine washable, thank heavens. Vintage wool ones might need soaking and scrubbing instead, though. White stocks stain easily, and Polly recommends spraying Vanish on cotton stocks and leaving it to dry before putting the stocks in the washing machine as normal – don’t do this to silk ones, though. If you don’t hand-wash silk stocks, they have a very short life, as I rediscover about once every two seasons…

Whether you wear a crash hat or hunting cap, the velvet cover needs wiping free of mud and then steaming over a kettle to lift the nap of the velvet – and always brush upwards.

And don’t forget to clean your hunting whip – both the leather thong and the string lash need to have the mud scrubbed off.

All excellent advice to which, in a perfect world with infinite amounts of time and space, we would all adhere. I suggest, however, that we do our best, scrub – or polish – a little harder and don’t worry about it too much. **H&H**

Hannah’s hacks

The good advice given in this article is all very well, but the extremely time-poor among us will be relieved that there are some useful shortcuts. Hannah Goffe, who hunts with the Heythrop with her children, Ella and Iris, has some enterprising suggestions:

- **“Hang muddy coats in the shower [on the other side to the shower head] to steam-clean them, then it’s really easy to brush them.”**
- **“Keep a powerful hand-held vacuum cleaner in the lorry and vacuum your children’s hunting coats when they’ve got them on to get rid of the worst of the mud and hair.”**
- **“Use hair-straighteners to iron your stock.” Genius!**

Vincomte blows away the

The Hales family's home-bred makes a return to form after brushing off a virus, while a broodmare continues to produce some notable winners

By SARAH RADFORD

Pictures by Landscape and Horses Photography

South View Winter Classic, Cheshire

ANTHONY CONDON'S classy partner SFS Vincomte "blew off the cobwebs" to take a two-second win in the 1.40m winter grand prix, jumping one of just two clears from nine jump-off contenders.

The second phase looked as if it would be quick, as some consistent winners lined up for their shot, but a double across the central diagonal caused the majority of the field to fault.

Opening rounds from last year's winner Joe Trunkfield – this time riding Greenacres Vanquish – and Paul Barker (Green Grass) gave a good indication of the target time, but with four faults, before Tom Whitaker delivered the first clear with Amaretto Daisy.

Anthony and Pat Hales's home-bred 13-year-old then smashed their target, leaving the remaining combinations all faulting in pursuit.

"I didn't think the jump-off course looked anything out of the ordinary but it was quite a galloping course, and maybe because the horses were opened up over the first four fences, they were getting a little flat at the double and getting caught out," Anthony said. "I slowed down just to make sure of it."

The win marked a return to form for the five-star gelding, who was jumping his second grand prix back after a break.

"He had a viral infection in October last year and it's taken a couple of months for him to get over it and be back to his best," said Anthony.

"We jumped him in the grand prix at Solihull two weeks ago. He was very good but had one down, probably where he was a bit rusty, but it looks like the cobwebs are getting blown off now."

> *"The owners have played a massive part in me getting better and better horses"*
>
> SANDY MCLEAN

MCLEAN ON THE UP

SANDY MCLEAN has been impossible to ignore this season, with an ever-expanding string of quality horses and some strong results to match.

He brought eight horses to the show and every one of them had a win or second place – tallying six wins and also bagging a Hickstead ticket with the runner-up spot in the winter B&C qualifier.

"Something must have been going well for us!" said Sandy. "The horse I was most impressed with was probably Non Such Z, who was second in the winter B&C. It's a fairly new horse to me and I have finally got the buttons correct.

"Linda Billington owns him and they were pleased to see him going well. It was the only qualifier I jumped on him. The B&C is normally a quick class and Tom Whitaker's round was fantastic [he won on Prins Van't Gebergte]. I don't think anyone was getting close to beating him."

Sandy also headed a 1.40m open with his top ride Gino F, the winter grade C with Holden, the winter seven-year-olds with Castlehill Kopa and a 1.30m open with another new ride, Preben Van De Doorknakker.

Edited by Jennifer Donald
jennifer.donald@futurenet.com
@jen_donald

cobwebs

Left: as one of just two clears in the jump-off, Anthony Condon and SFS Vincomte top the 1.40m winter grand prix by a two-second margin

Right: Thomas Dovkants and Top Gun XIV claim a brace of wins – and a Hickstead ticket

"I have only had Preben about three weeks," said Sandy. "He's an eight-year-old owned by Shirley Ash, and he was also fifth in the winter B&C. I think he's going to be another exciting one for this year."

His seven-year-old winner Castlehill Kopa, meanwhile, is owned by Leah Brash and was at only his second show back since Aintree last year.

"He's been on holiday and has come back and is jumping really well – he's also looking like a fun one," Sandy said.

"I now have 11 horses in, 10 of which are for 1.30m and above. I think my farrier hates me, as every week I have a new horse I need him to look at!

"Two months ago, I only had Gino to jump 1.40m on and now I have three or four coming through at that level. The owners have played a massive part in me getting better and better horses, and I feel like I've landed on my feet with some of the people I've met. It's exciting and I'm looking forward to summer."

"HE IS FULL OF ABILITY SO MUCH JUMP"

AN unexpected victory in the SEIB winter novice went to Thomas Dovkants, who collected a pair of wins with eye-catching grey Top Gun XIV, also claiming the Blue Chip Karma performance.

Competition for a Hickstead ticket was fierce, with 10 combinations delivering double clears from a jump-off field of 28.

"I was third from last and I already had two others in the jump-off – one had a faster time with one down and one was quite a green horse, so I went slower – I had ridden the course twice, so I thought, 'If I get it wrong a third time, I'm doing something wrong!'" said Thomas.

Ten-year-old "Wilson" has been in an amateur home jumping 1m opens and is currently with Thomas on schooling livery. He jumped his first Foxhunter two weeks ago, so was taking a small step down to contest the winter novice.

"We have ridden him in the past briefly, so we already knew him. He's not a difficult horse, he is full of ability and has so much jump, he just needs confidence," said Tom, who had nine horses at the show.

"We didn't expect him to win it at all and it probably changes the plan with him. We'll look to step him up sooner rather than later now and find him more of a professional home, as he's probably too switched on and careful for an amateur."

Paul Barker always seems to have something up his sleeve and he pulled out two wins in the Blue Chip qualifiers with Cludo IV, heading the Blue Chip Dynamic B&C and the Lister 1.25m.

Paul currently has the 13-year-old gelding in for a local client with the long-term aim to be sold.

"I've had him in for a few months now. He'd been jumping 1.20m but we took him to Morris the other week, where he won a 1.40m," said Paul, who brought just two horses to the show; this horse and his stallion Green Grass.

"He's had quite an easy life up until now so he needs to get out and be doing things. He's a consistent horse and a handy one to have around."

Graham Babes collected both a win in the winter six-year-olds and a ticket with the runner-up spot in the SEIB winter novice with the home-bred mare Bambi VII.

"We bred a foal from her in lockdown and then we got her riding and jumping, although she is still quite green," Graham said. "We took her to Vilamoura at the end of last year and jumped her there in five-year-old classes. She came home, had a bit of a break and South View was more or less her first show back.

"In three days, she has won the six-year-olds, come second in the winter novice and second in the newcomers."

Bambi is by Diamant De Semilly out of renowned Royal Feu broodmare Golden Du Marai.

"Her dam has passed away now, but she was very lucky for us. We took quite a lot of embryos from her and she bred a few really nice horses, including Annabel Shields' Wet Wet Wet," Graham added. "Bambi is probably developing into a favourite in the stable and we're very excited about her." H&H

"He's going to be exciting for this year," says Sandy McLean of new ride Preben Van De Doorknakker as they top a 1.30m open

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"He makes my life simple," says Henry Squibb of partner in crime Alothain De Blondel, as the pair claim the spoils in three classes

'He's an absolute speed demon'

A teenager rockets to victory to claim multiple wins and a 25-year-old gelding simply doesn't want to retire

Chard Equestrian, Somerset

By SARAH RADFORD

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD Henry Squibb was on flying form with John Renwick's Alothain De Blondel, winning the Lister 1.25m and two 1.30m opens.

The pair enjoyed success when they won the children-on-horses championship at Scope last year, after Henry had sat on the 13-year-old Selle Français gelding only a handful of times. They went on to secure a string of international results on an autumn tour.

"We spent five weeks out in Vilamoura on him and he won nearly every class he jumped. He is an absolute speed demon, he is so fast, which suits me as I like to be competitive," Henry said. "He's been around the block and knows his job, sees his fence and wants to get to it. He makes my life simple."

Henry was using Chard as an opportunity to jump some 1.30m and 1.40m classes, including with his own promising eight-year-old mare, Diatencona PS, who is being aimed at junior selection.

"Diatencona jumped a double clear on the last day then 'Alan' won us some diesel money, so we did what we set out to do," said Henry, who also picked up two third places in the 1.30m with Kimba Kasino.

"We are going to Gorla Minore and Sentower next and hopefully those shows will set me on track for the juniors at Pony of the Year Show."

A "GENUINE HORSE"

SOPHIE JINKS and Woo Hah edged ahead by just 0.46sec to claim the top ticket in the FMBs Therapy Systems star qualifier.

Sophie bought the now 10-year-old gelding as a four-year-old from his breeder Sammie-Jo Coffin, before he had ever competed, and has produced him up to 1.30m.

"I let him down the day before in the Lister 1.25m when we had the last fence, so the win made up for it," said Sophie, who works as an accountant as well as teaching at Pony Club.

"He's the most careful genuine horse in the world, but he needs a sweetener every now and then, as he can scare himself round a big track. He can just fly round a 1.10m."

Sophie is now planning to step the son of Zig-Zag back up to some bigger classes.

"We're aiming for a 1.30m and then after that, I will try to go out hunting to get the weight off him. He's a really chunky boy, so I struggle to keep him fit enough for those heights."

VOLTAIRE DESIGN

Sophie Jinks pilots Woo Hah to star qualifier glory by 0.46sec

Pictures by ESP-Photographic

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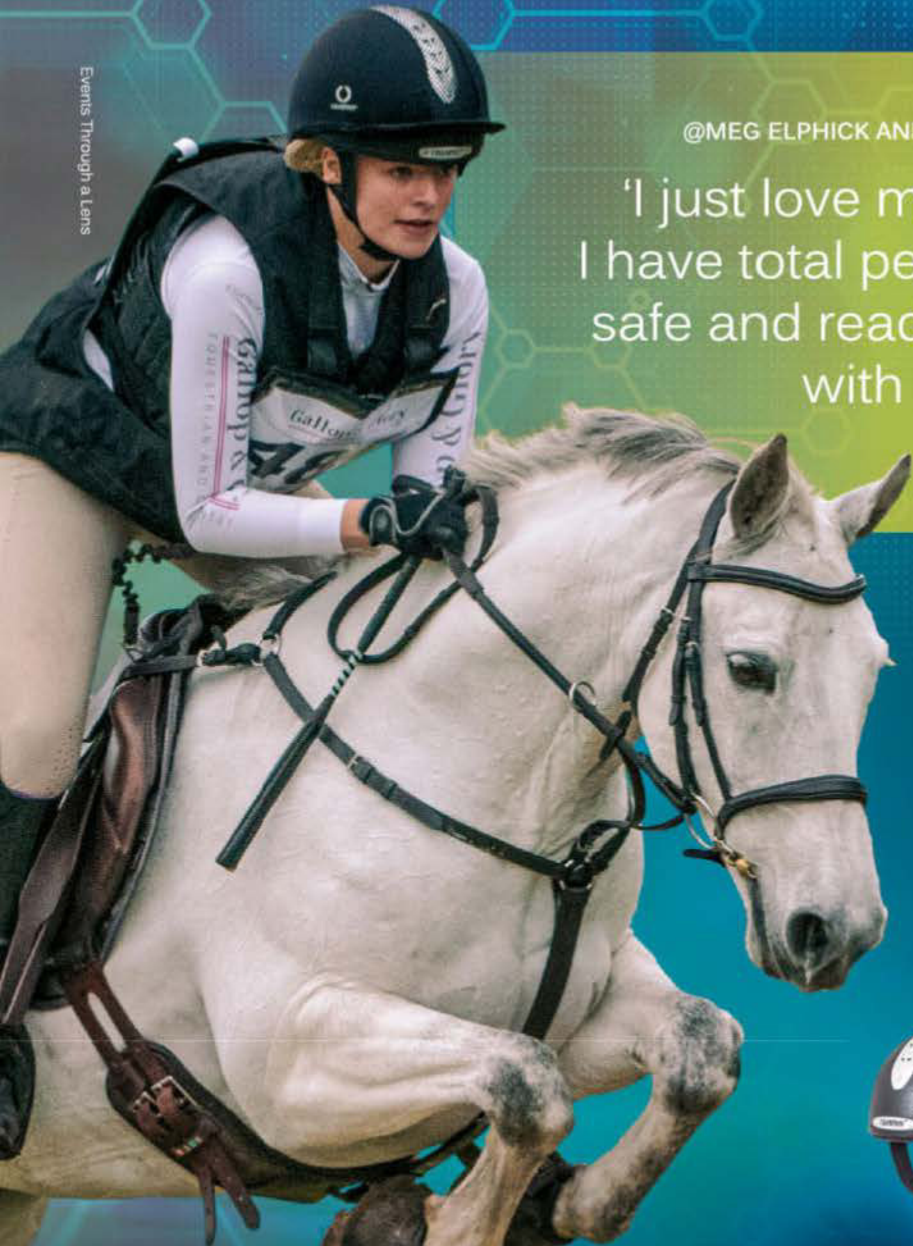

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Aintree EC, Merseyside

By SARAH RADFORD

"He loves it": Kim Webster and veteran Libero Boy II head the diamond qualifier

KIM WEBSTER's veteran 25-year-old Libero Boy II proved just how much he doesn't want to retire yet, as the pair headed the Heritage Insurance diamond qualifier.

Shrewsbury-based Kim, who also took second place with 10-year-old mare Melodie Fureen, has owned the Holstein gelding for the past 10 years and tried to retire him last year.

"He won two finals at Scope and we retired him, but he wasn't enjoying it," said Kim. "I got the vet to check him over and brought him back out. He's a different horse now he's competing again, he loves it."

The gelding had an international career with Niall Talbot before Kim bought him.

"He would have jumped week in, week out and travelled the world. He has more stamps on his passport than me," said Kim. "No one can believe he's still like he is at his age – I was asked if he was a youngster! He's a tough horse who is built to be sound."

Chelsea Jones topped the FMBs Therapy Systems star qualifier with 15.2hh Xavier V, a horse who has really found his confidence this past season.

"I met him when I was doing my level three extended diploma and he was one of the horses at the college," Chelsea said. "I clicked with him and a friend asked if I wanted to jump him, as college didn't suit him. He used to get stressed at shows and not want to jump, particularly fillers."

Over the past year, the warmblood has stepped up to jumping 1.10m and 1.15m, as well as some 1.20m classes.

"We qualified for the national amateur and veteran championships last year and were placed every day. He's won another Blue Chip qualifier as well," said Chelsea, who was also second in the 1.15m members cup qualifier.

"It feels quite an achievement, as a lot of people doubted him." **H&H**

"HE'S GONE FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH"

ELLA KAY was on top form for the second small pony premier in succession, doubling down on a 128cm winter qualifier win at Morris with Red Alert by taking the top spot at South View on the second day with Toplines Royal Wonder (pictured).

Ella and the nine-year-old gelding jumped the sole clear of the first round to take the pony's biggest victory to date.

"It was a technical course with a lot of difficult turns. There was a water tray at number four, which was a really square oxer and was causing problems for a lot of people," said Ella, who'd bagged tickets on both her ponies at the opening small pony premier at Aintree.

"I was first to go on Red Alert and we got a tiny bit too close and knocked it. A lot of other people made the same mistake, but Toplines Royal Wonder jumps big over water trays, so he wasn't touching that fence! He's quite pacey and we got a good stride to it."

Ella's family spotted Toplines Royal Wonder when he was out competing with Cate Kerr early last year and thought "he was fantastic".

"We asked if the owners would sell him and they said no, but later they changed their minds," Ella's mother Charlotte said. "He'd only ever jumped 15 classes; he was a JD, but we put him in Horse of the Year Show [HOYS] qualifiers as Ella was short on pony power.

"Height wasn't his problem, it was experience, and he had a few poles in each one, but he qualified for HOYS at Morris. As he's been learning, he's gone from strength to strength."

ONE TO WATCH

HOW I MAKE IT WORK

"I COME HOME MOST WEEKENDS TO RIDE"

LAURA CHARLEY, who juggles a career in the Army with four horses, won the FMBs Therapy Systems star qualifier at Bury Farm, Bucks, with Ferrara VII.

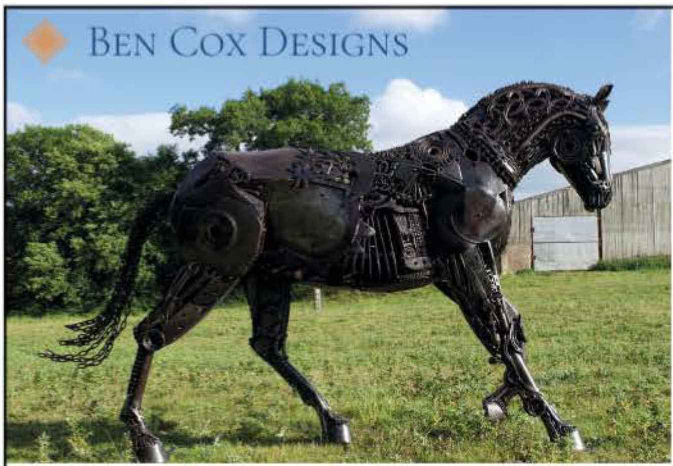
They were the quickest of 11 combinations through to the jump-off, and were collecting their second Blue Chip ticket, having already qualified for the Lister 1.25m.

"'Fern' is an out-and-out winner and she feels quite pony-like to ride," said Laura. "My mum keeps them all ticking over and I come home most weekends to ride."

Emma-Jo Slater bounced back to form after a few weeks off with a rib injury, winning the Blue Chip Joint RLF power qualifier with Kimba Je T'Aime, as well as taking second in Saturday's 1.30m open with Kimba Flamenco.

Pictures by Majestic Photography and Phil Hillier

BEN COX DESIGNS



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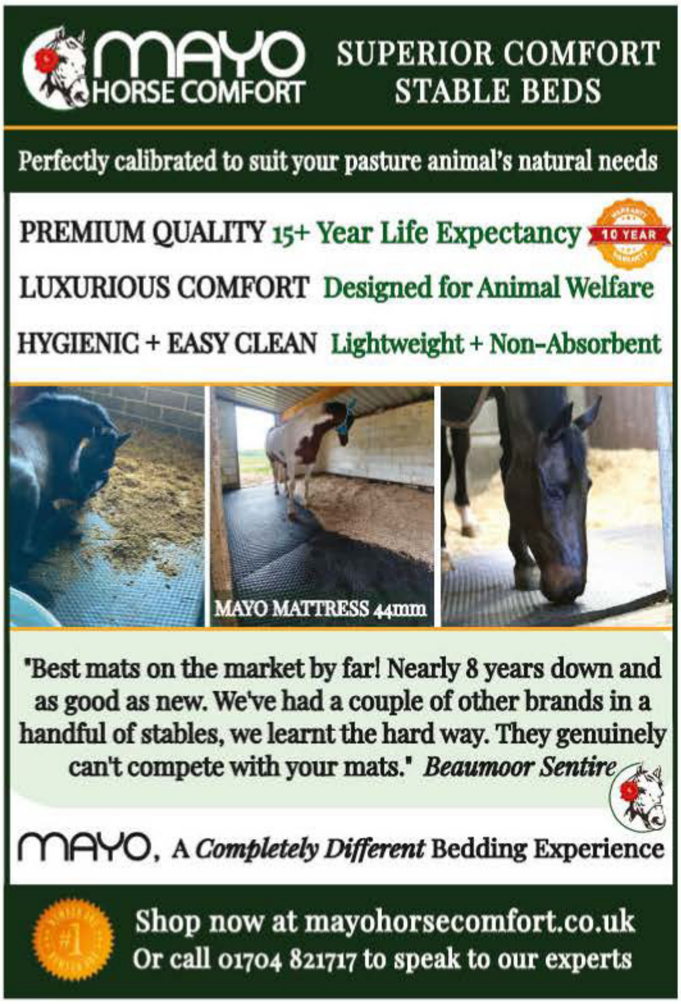

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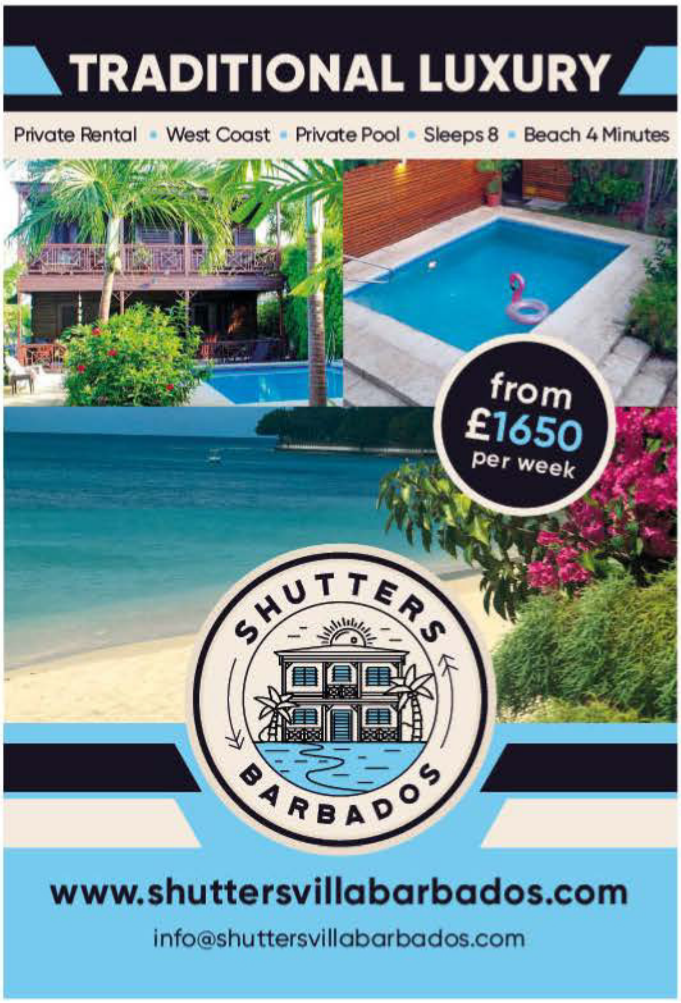

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Welsh cob wows for double victory

“He gives everything his best go”: BD newbies Ellis Simister and Welsh cob Derradda Rummy land prelim and novice titles

Picture by Jamie Agnew Photography

A Welsh cob lands a pair of Area Festival titles and a rider scores a win with a horse he’s been reunited with after six years apart

Morris EC Area Festival, Ayrshire

By STEPHANIE BATEMAN

A CHANGE in discipline is proving fruitful for Welsh cob gelding Derradda Rummy, who landed both the novice and prelim bronze classes with plus-70% scores under owner Ellis Simister.

Ellis only joined British Dressage (BD) late last year, having previously concentrated on working hunter showing and grassroots eventing.

“I’ve never been the bravest of riders when it comes to jumping, so I thought I’d like to have a go at dressage, and we’ve never looked back since,” she said. “My trainers Scott McLellan and Grant McKenzie told me to go out and get enough points for the Area Festivals, so that’s what we did. The three novices we did to get to the Area Festivals were the first ones we’d ever done.”

Ellis says the gelding has a typical Welsh “look at me” vibe.

“His attitude and temperament are just the best I’ve ever experienced in a pony,” added Ellis, who says that she couldn’t do it without the help of her sister Susie.

“No matter what you are doing, he has the most trainable attitude. Even though I’m still really new to dressage, he gives everything his best go. We’re learning together, but it’s all coming right and I’m really excited to progress down this journey.”

“HE’S BEEN VERY EASY”

FREELANCE groom Mary Pearson and five-year-old Oldenburg gelding Spielrencio earned their championship ticket with a win in the novice silver with 72.64%. Mary has owned the Spielberg gelding since he was three.

“He’s been very easy since we’ve had him,” said Mary, who trains with Karen Dewar. “He’s finally finding his own balance and getting more and more marks – it’s lovely being able to just sit there.”

The pair also have the prelim regionals to attend, after which they plan to do some young horse classes before moving up the levels.

“My older horse had to retire, so it’s the first time I have had one this young, but he’s been perfect since day one,” she added. “It’s a dream come true to finally get to the nationals.”

> *“His temperament and attitude are just the best I’ve ever experienced in a pony”*
> ELLIS SIMISTER ON DERRADDA RUMMY

TEENAGER MASTERS THE MOVES

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD National Academy athlete Jessica Finney won both medium classes at Bold Heath EC, Cheshire, riding her 16-year-old Don Schufro gelding Rough Lee So Schufro, also known as Arnie.

The pair have only been together since November, and Jessica is combining doing her GCSEs with competing.

“Arnie has had many successes at BD and is hopefully going to help Jess work through the levels,” said Jess’s mother Martine. “Jess has had a lot of success with her previous ride, winning the home internationals and regionals, and is quickly developing an understanding of Arnie, mastering the new movements required at this level.”

ONE TO WATCH

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'It was on my bucket list'

Solihull Area Festival, West Mids

AFTER losing her horse of 20 years to colic, Peggy Postma was convinced her horse-owning journey was over, but fast-forward 18 months and she is living the dream.

"I was heartbroken after losing my home-bred Arabian to colic, but very quickly realised I simply couldn't live without horses in my life, so in walked Ice Cold Fever G, aka Tom, whom I bought from Charlie Hutton," explained Peggy. "I travelled to Scotland from London to see him and fell in love at first glance."

After "gruelling posture clinics" before the show, Peggy and Tom pulled off a novice bronze win at Solihull Area Festival with 69.1%.

"It was on my bucket list to learn to ride a big-moving horse like Tom, and I am lucky he is so tolerant of me," she said. "My trainers Ben Franklin and Rob Waine are amazing and really push me. It's all a dream come true – at 60 years old, I never thought I'd be in this position."

Emily Perry and 15-year-old gelding Dondersteen secured their championships place when topping the inter I with 68.19%. Emily has owned the jumping-bred gelding out of a Gladstone mare since an unbacked three-year-old.

"He's starting to develop his piaffe and passage – he's got his ones so we'll move up to inter II in the not-too-distant future and then grand prix," said Emily, who trains with Isobel Wessels and Amy Woodhead.

"His changes are brilliant and his canter is huge. He's still a bit fiery and it can be hard to get a clear round, but he can do all the hard stuff like pirouettes and tempis. He keeps me on my toes."

Emily Perry and Dondersteen claim an inter I Area Festival win

"Her grandmother was my foundation mare": Dan Henson and Define Time, the Dimaggio mare he bred and bought back years later, secure a medium win

"IT'S REALLY SPECIAL"

AFTER a long hiatus from the dressage arena, Dan Henson is returning with a bang riding his own 10-year-old home-bred mare Define Time, who headed the medium silver with 71.47%.

Dan backed the Dimaggio mare before selling her as a four-year-old, and then bought her back last year.

"She's gone from strength to strength," said Dan. "We went to the elementary championships at the nationals last year and then moved up to medium for this winter season.

"She's 10, so a little behind for her age, but she's got brilliant paces and a lovely outlook. It's lovely to have a horse that I've bred take me back into the world of dressage. I had her grandmother, who was my foundation mare, so it's really special."

'He went from healthy to really poorly'

Speedgate Arena Area Festival, Kent

AFTER a three-month break recovering from a virus, rising seven-year-old PRE gelding Americano Arenas landed the prelim silver at Speedgate, securing his place at the nationals with owner Tina Baseley. They were also third in their fourth-ever novice.

"He had three months off from October last year with a nasty virus, and has only been back competing in the last few weeks, so he's done brilliantly," said Tina, who bought him as a four-year-old stallion from the Arena Stud in Spain during lockdown.

"He's usually quite sensitive and forward going, but at his last show before his time off, I got him back out to do his second test at a show and he didn't want to move and wouldn't eat. He went from being a healthy horse to being very poorly."

Blood tests showed he was suffering from a virus.

"Luckily, he has recovered, and we're now aiming to do the PRE championships and go up the BD levels," added Tina who trains with Gail Lawrence.

"I'm an older rider, so to get this opportunity at this stage in life is brilliant."

Gaby Botfield and her eight-year-old Trakehner gelding Woodcroft Oscar, won the elementary silver with 70.54%.

"I've had him since he was three," said Gaby, who trains with Liz Mills.

"The leg-yield is something I've always struggled with, but that came off well in the test. His trot work is his highlight and he loves to show off his medium trot and flick his toes. The plan is to get to the nationals and then move up to medium." **H&H**

Tina Baseley and PRE Americano Arenas scoop prelim victory

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Shishkin is restored to greatness

An emotional Nicky Henderson delivers his star chaser back to the "top table" and the Twiston-Davies family are now targeting the Champion Hurdle

"Today was everything": the popular Shishkin lands Ascot chase glory under Nico de Boinville

Ascot Racecourse, Berks

By MARCUS ARMYTAGE

THERE are few more appreciated sights in racing than a good horse restored to greatness, and the welcome Shishkin received from the Ascot crowd on his return to the winners' enclosure after a demolition job in the Betfair Ascot Chase said it all.

Just over a year ago, Nicky Henderson's now nine-year-old beat Energumene in the thriller for the Clarence House over two miles at the same course.

Whether that epic encounter, in which he just outstayed the Irish Champion Chaser, left its mark I'm not sure, but things have not gone so well since. He never went a yard at Cheltenham and was pulled up after a mile when favourite for the Champion Chase. He was diagnosed with a rare bone ailment, came back, made a noise in the Tingle Creek – in which he was flat to the boards all the way – which resulted in a wind operation.

With his 45 years' experience, Henderson has been itching to try him over further, just to make life easier for him in a race, so he wasn't flat to the mat all the way, and what a difference it made. He travelled, he jumped and once again he found life staggeringly easy, sauntering home to beat Pic D'Orhy by 16 lengths.

The only question on the back of that run is are you sensible, sticking at the distance and going for the Ryanair Chase – the lesser race – as Henderson has indicated he favours? Or do you gamble, take the brave man's route and go for Gold-testing stamina that breeding suggests he has?

"He was in his comfort zone the whole way round," reflected Henderson. "He jumped and travelled and Nico de Boinville said he took a blow going to the second-last, so he'll improve for the run. We've got the old Shishkin back. It's been a big effort from a lot of people.

"We changed a lot of things and today was the crossroads for him, and he has a future back on the top table. It's extra-special when they come back – today was everything."

De Boinville added: "Just going a stride slower helped him. He was able to jump and travel and latch onto the bridle, which he hasn't been doing over two miles. Today, the most important thing was to get his confidence back and enjoying himself – you want them to be enjoying themselves and not under pressure the whole time."

"ON HIS DAY, HE'S GOT AN ENGINE"

IF there was another Festival winner at Ascot, it was probably Oscar Elite (pictured, in orange), but winning his first chase – the Bateaux London Reynoldstown Novices' Chase – at the ninth attempt might not instil you with huge confidence.

Few horses were built more in the mould of a three-mile chaser than Joe Tizzard's Oscar Elite and he likes Cheltenham, having finished second in an Albert Bartlett and third in last year's Ultima Handicap Chase, the race he will return for in three weeks.

ONE TO WATCH

He only faced three rivals on Saturday, but they had all won their last starts, whereas he had pulled up at Chepstow, and he comfortably beat Bold Endeavour by 7½ lengths.

"He comes better in the spring," said Tizzard. "On his day, he's got an engine and that will have given him a confidence booster. We've chucked him in all the deep ends, which is why he hadn't won before today."

Pictures by Alamy and Getty

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Quick Wave (left) battles it out with Snow Leopardess to claim Haydock chase glory under Harry Bannister

‘Fragile’ mare shows her staying credentials

Haydock Park Racecourse, Merseyside

IN many ways, the story of this year’s Betfred Grand National Trial Handicap Chase was not so much about the Venetia Williams-trained winning mare, Quick Wave, but the jockey Harry Bannister, whose first winner it was since returning from a dislocated hip injury that he sustained in October.

In an all-female finish, Quick Wave and Bannister beat the grey mare Snow Leopardess in a terrific duel with Cloudy Glen, also trained by Williams but having his first start for over a year – and finishing an eye-catching third – with a view to the National.

“I can’t take too much credit, because she’s a lovely mare and a credit to Venetia and the team who had her spot on today,” said Bannister. “She’s an exceptionally good trainer and I’m just so thankful for her faith to put me back on this mare. It means a lot to get this first winner back; it’s been a long road and there are a lot of people to thank.

> *“She’s an exceptionally good trainer”*
>
> HARRY BANNISTER

“She’s the ideal mare for a race like this. The fact she’s beaten Snow Leopardess and Cloudy Glen just shows her staying credentials.”

Williams said: “Quick Wave used to be a bit fragile and wasn’t the easiest to train, but she’s improved on that front as she’s got older. The National is the aim and the same with Cloudy Glen – he has had a few problems, nothing of significance, but he travelled well for a long way.”

‘Cheltenham here we come!’

Wincanton Racecourse, Somerset

KATCHIT was the last horse, in 2008, to win the Kingwell Hurdle and the Champion Hurdle for which it is a trial. On Saturday, I Like To Move It led going to the second-last and readily went clear to beat Knappers Hill by 17 lengths.

With Constitution Hill and State Man waiting in the wings, I Like To Move It is unlikely to add his name to a list that also includes Bula, Lanzarote, Kribensis, Hors La Loi III and Alderbrook. But there is nearly always a long-priced finisher in the first four at Cheltenham and there will be far worse each-way shots at the Festival next month.

Nigel Twiston-Davies said: “Two-and-a-half miles at Cheltenham last time was no good for him, but brought back to two miles, we were certainly hopeful today. I know we can’t get anywhere near Constitution Hill, but we will give him something to think about and where else can we go after a performance like that? Cheltenham here we come!

“He is right up there with the best hurdlers I have trained, like The New One and Khyber Kim, who was second in the Champion Hurdle.”

Sam Twiston Davies added: “Obviously Constitution Hill is an aeroplane, but there is massive money on offer and he deserves to be there. To go and win is going to be incredibly tough, but it’s horse racing and you never know.”

Named by one of the trainer’s brood after the song by Will.I.Am, I Like To Move It was bought by Jamie Shepperd and his wife Anne-Marie after winning his first bumper.

“He was our second-ever purchase and has taken us on a most amazing trip,” said Shepperd. “We were sat at home and Nigel had a runner in a bumper called I Like To Move It. We watched the race and I texted Nigel after he won the race by nine lengths and said congratulations. Within five seconds of sending the text, I got a call from Nigel saying, ‘Do you want to buy him?’

“He bolted up in his first race for us at Wincanton. The dream is to go to Cheltenham now and Aintree after that. Constitution Hill is one amazing horse and State Man is coming over from Ireland, so the Champion Hurdle is going to be a good race.” H&H

I Like To Move It proves he’s in the groove as he gallops to victory in the Kingwell Hurdle under Sam Twiston-Davies

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Tully's Touch on top

One jockey continues his sensational run of form and another breaks his duck while following in his family's footsteps

By STEPHANIE BATEMAN

The "versatile" Tully's Touch jumps in front, going on to take the spoils in the mixed open under Jack Andrews, one of a treble of wins for the jockey

Puckeridge Hunt, Horseheath, Cambs

JOCKEY Jack Andrews strengthened his lead at the top of the men's leaderboard when landing a treble at Horseheath.

He secured one of his wins in the INEOS Grenadier mixed open riding Tullys Touch, for trainer John Ibbott and owner Christina Blockley. This was the 10-year-old by Touch of Land's 10th pointing win.

"He's one of my favourites – that's my sixth win on him now," said Jack. "He's very versatile and has won on all types of ground and over different tracks. He's got a good turn of foot, especially in tactical races when there are not many runners. It was close in the end but he won well."

Another of Jack's victories came in the maiden when the Stuart Morris-trained Classic Ruler got his head in front for owners Claire and Jennifer Knight. The nine-year-old by Native Ruler was making his 10th start between the flags, having run under Rules for Caroline Bailey during the middle of his career.

"He won on his debut in a point-to-point bumper in 2019 and it's taken a while to get his head back in front since," said Jack. "He's not the most confident jumper and can be timid over fences, but on the quicker ground he jumped OK. It was quite a duel from two out, but he stuck it out well."

> *"He's got a good turn of foot"*
> JACK ANDREWS

Jack's third win came in the intermediate when six-year-old mare Meetuatnine got her head in front in only her second run for Stuart Morris and owner Julie Marriott.

"She ran in the intermediate as there wasn't a restricted on the card," said Jack. "It ended up being only two of us and that paid off. I tracked the favourite the whole way and she quickened up on a late run."

The Glass Half Full Club's seven-year-old mare by Scorpion, Flashy Kate, rewarded connections for their patience with a win on her eighth start in the maiden for trainer Andrew Pennock under Charlie Marshall.

"She's been close a few times," said Andrew. "She's by Scorpion and they often want top of the ground, so we thought we'd try it. Charlie said it was the best feeling she'd given him, so we'll stick to quick ground with her now."

Pictures by Graham Bishop, Tim Holt and Sweet Photography

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Impressive debut

Countryside Alliance Club (Wessex), Badbury Rings, Dorset

IMPERIAL D'AINAY pulled off an impressive performance on his debut run to head the maiden under James King for Chris Barber and The Boundary Stables Partnership.

"He's a lovely big horse," said James. "Chris is renowned for turning out promising youngsters with the view of going under Rules, and this is one of them.

"He was a bit green later on when he was on his own, which was to be expected with it being his first time on the track, but he won with ears pricked and had plenty left in the locker."

The restricted went to King's Quay for Matthew Hampton and owner Laura Claydon, ridden by Martin McIntyre.

"It's the first time I've sat on him and it was quick ground," said Martin. "I got him into a good rhythm – he was a bit frosty early on – and he then got better and warmed to it. Hopefully he'll come on from that run."

James King pilots Imperial D'Ainay to a maiden victory

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"IT WAS BRILLIANT"

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD Tom Easterby is following family tradition by landing success in the saddle. At Askham Bryan, he broke his duck when nine-year-old Crossgalesfamegame won the conditions (level two).

"It was brilliant – I couldn't believe it, crossing the line in front was an amazing feeling," he said. "I rode her at Sheriff Hutton the first time out and then took a fall from her at Sinnington – she never picked up, which was a shock because she has always schooled well at home.

FIRST WIN

"I had a change of tactics today and rode her a bit more positively and it made all the difference. My sister Ellie rides her at home while I'm at school and does a good job with her. She'll go to Charm Park now."

'It surprised me how well he ran'

York North & West of Yore, Askham Bryan College, Yorks

THE EASTERBYS dominated at Askham Bryan, claiming three of the six races.

William Easterby trained the conditions winner Crossgalesfamegame who was bought from Doncaster in May for his younger brother Tom to ride (see box, above).

William then rode six-year-old Hollington to victory in the maiden.

"I thought he was a nice horse at home, but it really surprised me how well he ran today," said William. "It's a real family effort – Mum [Sarah] owns them and Emily, my sister, rides them out every day."

William's second riding victory came in the intermediate when five-year-old Fascinating Rhythm got his head in front for trainer Stephanie Easterby.

"He's a nice horse who has already performed well this year – this was his third win – and he's now qualified for the intermediate final at Cheltenham," added William.

Joe Wright rode Diaboleo to a victory in the maiden for Robin Tate and The Armstrong Partnership.

"He's too well bred for the job really," said Joe. "He's by Galileo and quite a few of his siblings have been Group Three horses. He's come off the Flat and was bought pretty cheaply from the Doncaster sales.

"He has come on from his first run and got the job done here. He's not the most natural jumper yet, but he's getting there, and hopefully he can go on through the grades." **H&H**

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&Cs apply

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16.3hh & over

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HORSES *for* SALE

Limbo - 16hh, 11-year-old, bright bay gelding

Height: 16hh **Age:** 11 years
Price: POA **Location:** Uckfield, East Sussex
Description: By Quality out of a Canadian River sired mother. He is careful, speedy, and most of all fun! He has a wonderful character and always has a smile on his face! He is good to clip, shoe, travel, etc. and is very easy to look after at home and at shows.
07778616990
sales@equinequality.com

Allrounder Gelding

Height: 16.3hh
Age: 8 years
Price: POA
Description: Super talented 16.3 hh 8 years old Irish sport horse gelding, very well behave and well train, he has a super nice character.
077 5806 4515
karenlcaplan@gmail.com

SJ Schoolmaster

Height: 17hh
Age: 13 years
Price: POA
Description: Dark Bay, 17hds, 13yrs, KWPN gelding Numero Uno. 581 points CSI2*, exceptionally well trained and produced from a youngster. May consider loan. Suit YR.
07708 445295
rfallows@abs-cloud.com

Cordette - A real promising Grand Prix prospect!

Height: 16.1hh **Age:** 8 years
Price: POA **Location:** Uckfield, East Sussex
Description: Bay mare by Millfeild Cascade, out of a Lorenzo mother. Cordette herself has got her two national 130 clears for next years National Championships. Recently just jumped her first 140 and was clear and second, she is super careful, full of scope with masses of stride. She also has plenty of blood.
07778616990
sales@equinequality.com

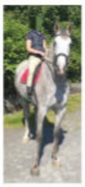
11yr 16'3 Gelding

Height: 16.3hh
Age: 11 years
Price: £4,000
Description: Allrounder dressage not for a complete novice eligible for ROR good to hack alone & in traffic, can be forward with others never bucks rears.
07929624106
rach0906@hotmail.co.uk

Well Bred Gelding

Height: 17.2hh
Age: 6 years
Price: £6,750
Location: Warwick
Description: Stunning 17.2hh Bay Gelding 6 years old and produced slowly due to size. Very well related Sire being Pollux De Muze Z.
07377266171
info@argentoequestrian.co.uk

RID 16.2/3h 4yo m

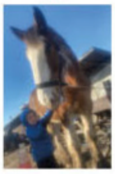


Height: 16.2hh
Age: 4 years
Price: POA
Description: Quiet to ride. Open to vet. Fully reg. Based in Ireland with transport arranged.
07772231872
clarecameron11@gmail.com

16 hand bay mare

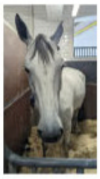
Height: 16hh
Age: 15 years
Price: £7,000
Description: 16h mare loves to jump. Dante is a great schoolmistress for someone that can ride. Great to clip catch load shoe and is up to date with everything.
07745375819
hgclayden@gmail.com

Clydesdale gelding



Height: 18.2hh
Age: 13 years
Price: £7,500
Description: Clive he's super genuine and such a gentleman. He's been a pleasure to own but due to personal circumstances he is looking for his new home.
07809137252
shannonhtasker@icloud.com

Stunning mare



Height: 17.1hh
Age: 10 years
Price: £7,500 ovno
Description: Aurora has spent the last year with met police doing guard changes and is a comfortable armchair-sized horse for those lazy rides in the country.
07710828995
mv00238@surrey.ac.uk

Future BS/BE Star!

Height: 16.1hh
Age: 5 years
Price: £14,000
Description:
JEREMY - FUN 5yo 16.1 competing at 90cm+ Huge scope, easy ride, point & jump. Not strong. Correctly produced. Fit & ready to go! Great teenagers horse.
07427 695636
h.midnightes@gmail.com

Geo

Height: 16.1hh
Age: 6 years
Price: POA
Description: With Star Quality for the Big Classes. Grey gelding by George Z out of a Corrado mother. In production and being brought on carefully, can be purchased now, or left with us to progress his jumping career.
07778616990
sales@equinequality.com

Incredibly Gelding

Height: 17.2hh
Age: 11 years
Price: £23,000
Description: He is turned out every day. He has always been in professional training and is a lovely, genuine person. An absolute pleasure to ride.
078 5565 8476
marzanovwest@gmail.com

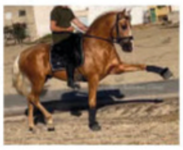
Hunter/team chaser

Height: 16.3hh
Age: 11 years
Price: £6,000
Description: Successfully teamchased and fab hunter. Big bold jump. Has also XC SJ dressage. Good to hack traffic shoe clip etc. Can weave hence price.
07766314123
ceboxall@gmail.com

Top PRE - Competition

Height: 16.1hh
Age: 5 years
Price: €21,000
Location: Spain
Description:
PRE / Full papers / Stallion / 5,5yo / 1.64m. Wow effect. Quality and mover for dressage. Piro FREE.
0034657314412
alexandalusianshorses@gmail.com

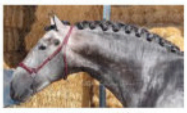
Dream Horse Palomino



Height: 15.3hh
Age: 4 years
Price: €18,000
Location: Spain
Description:
PRE / stallion / 4yo / 1.62cm / Piro free + good xrays / basic ridden-spanish walk.
0034657314412
alexandalusianshorses@gmail.com

15.3hh -16.2hh

Dapple grey lusitano



Height: 16.2hh
Age: 4 years
Price: €11,000
Location:
Spain
Description: Lusitano / stallion / 4,5yo / 1.67cm. Nice character basic ridden. Halfpass. Spanish walk. He is available in Spain.
+34657314412
alexandalusianshorses@gmail.com

Eventing / SJ / WH

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 7 years
Price: £18,000
Description: 16.2hh 7 year old gelding by Arezzo, dam by Obos Quality. Brought on slowly, fit and ready to go, currently competing successfully on BS circuit.
07969872972
Griseldahandy@gmail.com

Striking Colt

Height:
16.2hh
Age: 3 years
Price: £6,500
Description:
3 year old colt.
Polish warmblood x tb colt. Standing at roughly 16.2hh. He's been lightly schooled and sat on, wasn't phased.
07925678504
bradburycharlotte2@gmail.com

Perfect mare

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 6 years
Price: £9,000
Description: 16.2 warmblood mare. 6yo by Samara Fly. Easy to do in all ways. Been the beach, somerford, clinics. Hacks alone and in company. Snaffle mouthed.
07715862028
Josshalsall@hotmail.co.uk

Filly by Amour G

Height: 16hh
Age: 2 years
Price: £3,500
Description:
Warmblood x Filly by Armour G 2yo make 16/16.2 shown successful in hand. Straight moving and showing plenty of scope in her first loose jumps.
07756813658
hairyhorses@hotmail.co.uk

BYE horse prospect

Height: 16hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £5,750
Description:
Quality young horse. Profesionally broken. Well bred. Green but willing and genuine with excellent temperament.
07718421838
judi.thurloe@btconnect.com

Genuine 9 year old

Height: 15.3hh
Age: 9 years
Price: £6,000
Description: 9 year old chest geld. 100% to hack in any traffic or big open spaces. Scopey jump. Kind to handle. Good family all rounder or would do all R. Club.
07718421838
judi.thurloe@btconnect.com

Hunter/eventer

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 6 years
Price: POA
Description: Behaves impecabbly and bold jumper. Trail hunts with BSV. Placed every outing UA eventing at 90cm, smart test, knows changes. Winner of workers.
07990673899
rosemaryscarlett2@gmail.com

6yo RoR Gelding

Height: 16.1hh
Age: 5 years
Price: £3,500
Description: Approx 16.1hh well furnished athletic blood type TB gelding. Extremely easy to do in all ways - nice and sound with a wanting to please attitude.
07771541096
regalracehorserehoming@gmail.com

16.2 8y/o TB mare

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 8 years
Price: POA
Description: Binky is really eager to learn and please has done some dressage. Loves to hack alone and in company. Snaffle mouthed at all times.
+447709812974
shona.white1@icloud.com

Eye catching Pre

Height: 15.3hh
Age: 3 years
Price: £8,000
Description:
Edecan 111 x Oleaje. Dressage bred 3 yr grey gelding. Currently 15.3h to make approx 16h. Owned from yearling. Well handled. Exciting blank canvas.
07834811532
kim_w83@hotmail.com

Smart safe eventer

Height: 16hh
Age: 5 years
Price: £18,500
Description: 16hh 5yo bay mare, potential to make a great event/allrounder 3rd in her 1st BE, hunted sensibly. Hacks alone & in company, good to clip, shoe, load.
07572201778
Megan_lawrence@outlook.com

Rolls Royce

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 10 years
Price: £12,500
Description:
Eric 10yo KWPN Gelding, Exceptionally well bred gelding by Johnson (Jazz) out of a Krack C x Ferro Damline at Lynch Equestrian.
+44 7780 451307
leah280389@aol.com

14.3hh -15.2hh

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Lea

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 11 years
Price: £15,000
Description: A fantastic mare looking for someone wanting to do a bit of everything. Hunted, team chased, eventing, showjumping.
07903730740
sredman2@hotmail.co.uk

Registered Percheron

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 3 years
Price: £6,750
Description:
Registered percheron colt recorded breeding, standing around 16.2hh, just turning 3yrs, lightly backed and turned away, nice gentle easy horse.
07724624095
vezlewis@gmail.com

Moortown Stargazer

Height: 15hh
Age: 2 year
Price: £2,650
Description: 2 year old coloured gelding to make 15hh. Well handled, good with the farrier, tie up and bath. Registered CHAPs. vaccinations and worming to date.
07508239464
vicky@bryn-eglur.co.uk

Beautiful Lusitano

Height: 15.2hh
Age: 10 years
Price: €9,000
Location: Spain
Description:
Lusitano/passport, stallion (sweet character), 10 yo, 156-7 Cremello color with blue eyes Flying changes / piaffe / Spanish walk.
0034657314412
alexandalusianshorses@gmail.com

Smart TB gelding

Height: 16hh
Age: 7 years
Price: £1,750
Description: 16hh, tb gelding, 8yrs, Event type, lovely mover, same home 18 months but not ridden since November due to lack of time, great little summer project.
07724624095
vezlewis@gmail.com

Competition prospect

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £15,000
Description: Well breed 4yr old black mare, schooling and hacking well, ready for age classes, showing temperament and ability to make a top competition prospect.
07724624095
vezlewis@gmail.com

Super PC/BE/BS

Height: 15.2hh
Age: 15 years
Price: £7,500
Description:
Brandy 15.2hh 15yo ISH mare by Creevagh Ferro EX Siebe at Lynch Equestrian.
+44 7780 451307
leah280389@aol.com

Dapple Dun Gelding

Height: 14.3hh
Age: 6 years
Price: £8,000
Description:
Stunning Gentleman in all ways. Safe steady fun versatile Le Trec, fun rides, hunt, hack. Excellent traffic, hack alone or company. Good to do all ways.
07919 357969
Ssilvervet@aol.com

Flashy Gelding

Height: 16.1hh
Age: 9 years
Price: £18,000
Description:
Beautiful 16.1hh 9 year old Bay Gelding by Kannan x Silvana's Heartbreak with breeding including Heartbraker and Nimmerdor.
07377266171
info@argentoequestrian.co.uk

Stunning RID mare

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 5 years
Price: £10,000
Description: Beautiful 16.2 5 yr old grey mare by Mylough Bouncer and Sea Crest. Won the breed show in 2022. Schooling well and hacking out. Fabulous temperament.
01923 263661 / 07949 884843
kshiels@rocketmail.com

Toby - hunting cob!

Height: 15hh
Age: 12 years
Price: £8,500
Location: Ireland
Description: Stunning black cob with numerous hunting seasons done Toby is a 12 year old stunning black cob, 15hh. He has done everything and been everywhere.
00353868077626
gertytynan@gmail.com

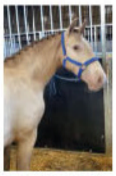
Bob - show Cob!

Height: 15.1hh
Age: 9 years
Price: £8,500
Location: Ireland
Description:
Absolute eye-catcher! Bob is a 9 year old coloured gelding, 15.1hh. He is an absolute stunning, gentle cob with plenty of bone, well put together.
00353868077626
gertytynan@gmail.com

4yo Warmblood x ISH

Height: 15.2hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £7,000
Description: Beautiful all black sports horse/ warmblood, rising 4, lightly backed/project. Stunning paces. Has massive potential in any discipline.
07930353420
phillywood1@gmail.com

Stunning Pearl



Height: 15hh
Age: 2 years
Price: £4,000
Description: Born 12/4/21; to make 15hh+; well handled/good in everyway; farrier/wormed regularly; fully vaccinated; very trainable; lightly /successfully shown.
07415 579042
ponyjoe@icloud.com

Safe cob

Height: 13.1hh
Age: 11 years
Price: £7,000
Description: 13.1hh 11yo Cob Gelding. The ultimate allrounder suitable for all members of the family, ridden by adults and children alike.
+44 7780 451307
leah280389@aol.com

Top quality pony

Height: 14.2hh
Age: 5 years
Price: £8,000
Description: Stunning, athletic pony with masses of potential. Honey has been Dr, SJ & XC. Has attended pony club lessons and been hunting and is good to hack.
07704301041
Beckypars@gmail.com

14.2hh & under

Stunning Show Cob

Height: 14.2hh
Age: 3 years
Price: £4,500
Description: To make 14:2hh+; born August 20; minimal marked; fully vaccinated/wormed; well handled/good with farrier; successfully shown; true to type traditional.
07415 579042
ponyjoe@icloud.com

Super Fun BS Pony

Height: 13.2hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £5,950
Description: Welsh Part Bred. Bay. Mare. 13.2. Rising 5 (2018) HOYS bloodlines. Exceptional mover. Fantastic breeding. Scope to a fence. Sweet Natured.
07391306050
indiarain@ymail.com

Stunning Palomino

Height: 12hh
Age: 8 years
Price: £1,950
Description: Registered Welsh A, palomino 12hh, gelding, very flashy, 8yrs, broken as 4yr old, then in adult home so only recently started ridden work again.
07724624095
vezlewis@gmail.com

Spotted 148 pony

Height: 14.2hh
Age: 13 years
Price: £7,500
Description: Grandsire won the Hamburg Derby 3 consecutive years. 100% in every way, competed successfully Pony Club, Riding Club, Camps, Merseyside.
07715121011
ginarobo_1221@hotmail.co.uk

Connie jumping pony

Height: 14.2hh
Age: 8 years
Price: £13,350
Description: Oyster Catcher *2015 by Derrymore Duncan. Competed @ 110 ready for 120. Jumps everything SJ & XC. Easy to do in all ways. Has hunted & hacks alone.
00447972646648
ch@youridewedrive.com

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Katie - class 1 mare!

Height: 14.2hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £9,950
Location: Ireland
Description: A golden beauty hard to find! Katie is a 4 year old purebred Connemara mare, she is a class 1 mare, standing at 14.2hh. She is a one in a million.
00353868077626
gertytynan@gmail.com

Ronnie - 13.2 pony!

Height: 13.2hh
Age: 4 years
Price: £5,950
Location: Ireland
Description: Sweet and loving pony! Ronnie is a 4 year old bay Connemara mare, standing at 13.2hh. She is a gorgeous mare with a gentle nature, she loves cuddles.
00353868077626
gertytynan@gmail.com

Super buckskin colt

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 8 months
Price: £5,500
Description:
Dressage bred yearling colt. Pooka x Uthopia x Sandro Song. To make approx 16.2hh. Has 8" bone currently. Absolutely Stunning with excellent paces.
07739759623
hannaht21@live.co.uk

Skewbald Shetland

Height: 10.2hh
Age: 8 months
Price: £950
Description:
Adorable Standard yearling colt to make approx 42" Registered by HOYS Sharptor Kingpin. Should be full up 42". Well handled, friendly and well grown.
07739759623
hannaht21@live.co.uk

14.2 Dun Connemara

Height: 14.2hh
Age: 4 years 8 months
Price: £10,500
Location: Marlborough, Wiltshire
Description: Millie has been to arena hires, xc schooling and autumn hunting. Hacks out alone & in company. Good in traffic and is used to farm animals and dogs.
07479685965
Klwrightlivery@gmail.com

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Irish Draught x Tb

Height: 16.3hh
Age: 1 year
Price: £2,750
Description: Well grown, Irish Draught x Tb filly, recorded breeding on and Irish Draught passport, to mature at 16.3 plus already approx 15.1hh, sweet natured.
07724624095
vezlewis@gmail.com

Irish Draught x Tb

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 1 year
Price: £2,400
Description: Beautiful Irish Draught x Tb Yearling Colt, rising 2 in August, standing around 15hh to mature well over 16hh, lovely mover, Irish Draught passport.
07724624095
vezlewis@gmail.com

Broodmares

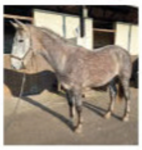
Proven Broodmare

Height: 16.2hh
Age: 15 years
Price: £2,500
Description: 87% blood. Produced strong, athletic, capable and bold foals with scores of 8.77+ at Futurity & catch the eyes of professional riders & owners. Weaver.
07769 312193
enquire@emblem-eq.co.uk

Irish Draught Gelding

Height: 16.1hh
Age: 2 years
Price: £4,000
Location: Alcester, Warwickshire
Description: Lovely upstanding, Irish Draught Gelding, just turned 2yrs, standing at 16.1hh approx, sweet natured, happy in or out, to make 17hh plus.
07724624095
vezlewis@gmail.com

Irish Draught Gelding



Height: 16.1hh
Age: 2 years
Price: £4,000
Description: Irish Draught Gelding, 2yrs, standing at 16.1hh approx, to make 17hh plus, sweet natured, going to be a true hunter type, Warwickshire, can deliver.
07724624095
vezlewis@gmail.com

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HORSES *for* SALE

Yearling filly

Height: 15hh
Age: 1 year
Price: £1,450
Description:
Sweet natured yearling filly standing at full up 13.3hh to make well over 15hh, happy in or out, Warwickshire, can deliver.
07724624095
vezlewis@gmail.com

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Youngstock

Beautiful filly

Height: 15hh
Age: Rising 2 years
Price: £2,000
Description: Sunny is a WPB rising 2 years old (unregistered on a Horse passport agency) She is to make 15hh+ and currently standing at 13.3 moves incredibly well.
07956110711
bethanyf2194@gmail.com

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Tel: 07948 240416

Totilas colt

Height: 17hh **Age:** 9 months
Price: POA **Location:** Yeovil, Somerset
Description: Total Eclipse by Totilas, brown/black colt, born 05/05/22, shows straight, powerful movement with reach and active hocks. Easy to handle, quick to learn, loads easily. He has enormous dressage potential and workable manner. BHHS premium.
07957159534
evalagasse@gmail.com

Full Loan Wanted

Height: 15.2-17hh
Price: POA
Location: East Sussex
Description:
Tentatively searching for a horse to full loan. 15.2-17hh to show jump up to 1.15.
07736165887
darcy.hammond1@outlook.com

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HORSES *for* SALE

Horseboxes & Vehicles

Bargain Equicruiser 7.5-tonne Horsebox

Price: £5,500
Location: Uckfield, East Sussex
Description: Iveco 75E15 chassis, 1996, MOT until May 2023. Nice lorry to drive. Full service history. 3 stalls. Sleeps 4. Odometer reading approx 115,000 miles. 6 speed manual gearbox. CD/Radio. Battery isolator. 19ft body. Approx 1.4 tonne payload. 240v electric hook-up. **01825831931**
sales@equinequality.com

EQ 18 tonne Scania In-Build 4 Stall / 6 Berth Auto

Price: POA **Location:** Uckfield
Description: 18 Tonne Scania Chassis. EURO6. Automatic gearbox. 250HP with good torque. Rear Air suspension. Overall length approx. 33ft 4". Air Con. Please note there are many other extras included as standard and may not be listed.
07778 616990
sales@equinequality.com

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Email: johnnylowe2018@incloud.com

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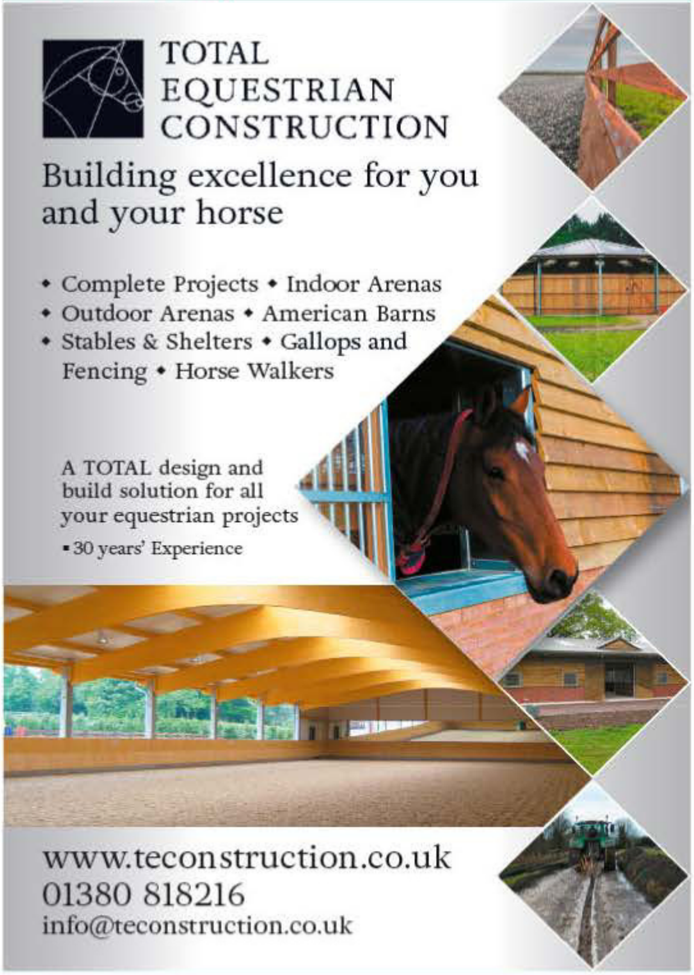

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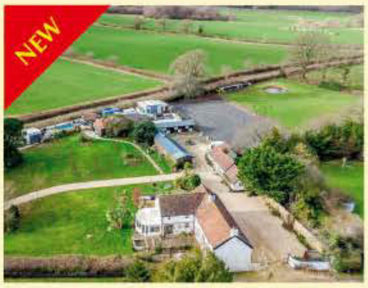

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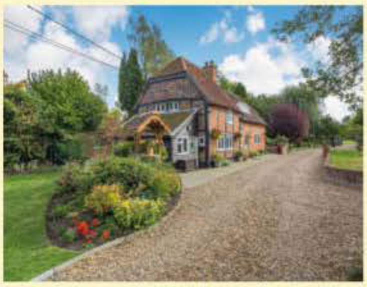

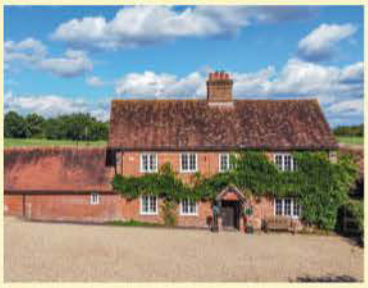

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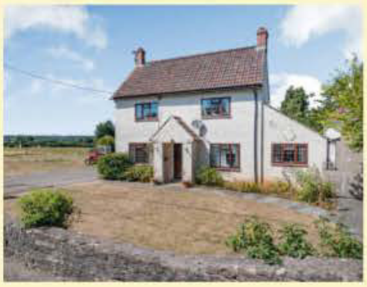

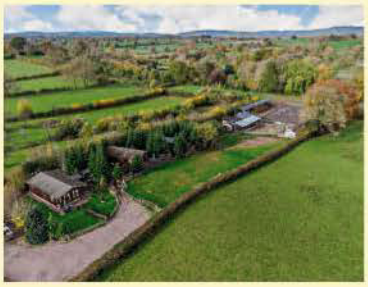

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A day at the races

Not claiming to be an expert when it comes to racing, *Tessa Waugh* nevertheless loves the atmosphere of a racecourse, immersing herself in the people-watching and festival feel

THE reach of hunting is something that always amazes me. For such a niche activity, the sport touches a multitude of worlds and not just the rural ones like farming. Hunting people count nurses, artists, builders, teachers, lawyers and vets among their number, but racing has more connections with hunting than most.

Adam and I were at Musselburgh on Sunday for the Cheltenham Trials weekend with Alec and a couple of his school friends. Our friend Rory, a former master of the Jed Forest, South Dorset and Berwickshire, is clerk of the course there and he was moving purposefully around the parade ring with his walkie-talkie when we arrived.

On our way in, we were able to look over his "manor"; several miles of immaculately kept grass, everything spick and span, not a divot or a piece of litter in sight.

This was a big weekend for the track with racing on Saturday and Sunday and ITV cameras poised to catch the action. Rory had a busy week in preparation.

> *"At Musselburgh, you can get really close to the action. Everything feels more immediate with no less buzz than the bigger tracks"*

Another friend, Franki, was one of the stewards on duty. She was hunting with us the day before and came over to find out what had happened after she went home.

My experience of racing is limited to point-to-points and the odd day here or there. Still, I love the atmosphere of the racecourse. At a smaller venue like Musselburgh, you can get really close to the action. Everything feels that much more immediate with no less buzz than the bigger tracks.

The people-watching is brilliant. You see a Dickensian range of characters – young lads cupping rollies in their palms in their best suits, stately older ladies in warm tweed and fur hats, the weathered faces of the bookies and bronzed glamazons straight from the pages of *Hello!* magazine.

It was student day on Sunday and the beats were vibrating from a tent at the end of the stands for the duration, giving off a festival feel for a thousand visitors from St Andrews and Edinburgh universities.

IT was a good day for trainers from our part of the world. Ann Hamilton had a win with her horse Pay The Piper, who is looked after by Laura, one of the masters of the Morpeth and a vital cog in the Hamiltons' operation. In the fifth, a small chestnut called Dr Shirocco, trained a couple of valleys away by Sandy Forster, took second place in the novice chase. Both of these horses come from smaller farm-based operations and it was great to see them triumph.

Cheltenham will be here before we know it, but there are plenty of days like these to enjoy beforehand. **H&H**

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